United Nations A/50/PV.13

General Assembly
Fiftieth Session

Official Records

13th plenary meeting
Friday, 29 September 1995, 3 p.m.
New York

President: Mr. Freitas do Amaral . . . . . (Portugal)

In the absence of the President, Mr. Tsaty-Boungou (Congo) Vice-President, took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 3.10 p.m.

Agenda item 9 *(continued)*

General debate

Address by Mr. Abdellatif Filali, Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs and Cooperation of the Kingdom of Morocco

The Acting President *(interpretation from French)*: The Assembly will first hear a statement by the Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs and Cooperation of the Kingdom of Morocco.

Mr. Abdellatif Filali, Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs and Cooperation of the Kingdom of Morocco was escorted to the rostrum.

The Acting President *(interpretation from French)*: I have great pleasure in welcoming the Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Kingdom of Morocco, His Excellency Mr. Abdellatif Filali, and inviting him to address the General Assembly.

Mr. Filali (Morocco) *(interpretation from Arabic)*: On behalf of the delegation of the Kingdom of Morocco, I am pleased to extend to the President my sincere congratulations on his election to the presidency of the fiftieth session of the General Assembly.

I am convinced that his diplomatic experience, excellent knowledge of international issues, and the many responsibilities that were assigned to him will ensure the success of our work and help us achieve the best results.

I also wish to assure the President that the delegation of the Kingdom of Morocco will spare no effort in cooperating with him and in providing every support to facilitate his task. I also salute in him the representative of a country which shares strong ties of friendship, cooperation and good-neighbourliness with Morocco.

I should like to avail myself of this opportunity to pay tribute to the outgoing President, Mr. Amara Essy, for his excellent conduct of the work of our previous session.

I should like also to express my deep appreciation to Mr. Boutros-Boutros Ghali, the Secretary General, for his untiring efforts towards the promotion of peace and security and for his constant endeavours in facing up to the tremendous responsibilities shouldered by the United Nations as a result of the developments that took place in the world over the past few years.

Those efforts of the Secretary-General acquire greater importance at a time when our Organization faces an unprecedented financial crisis.

This session stands out by the fact that it coincides with the fiftieth anniversary of our Organization. We may

95-86154 (E)

This record contains the original text of speeches delivered in English and interpretations of speeches delivered in the other languages. Corrections should be submitted to original speeches only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and be sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned, *within one month of the date of the meeting*, to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, Room C-178. Corrections will be issued after the end of the session in a consolidated corrigendum.

recall the day, 50 years ago, which gave rise to hope that we were embarking on an age of emancipation, liberty, independence and the maintenance of peace and security. That day heralded, for all humanity, the dawn of a new era that was received with joy as it was to be the beginning of a path of dialogue and cooperation that affected an alternative to violence and confrontation.

The important changes in international relations witnessed by the world over the past few years did usher in a new world situation. However, the fact that, in the new situation, the economic interests of the major Powers continued to have the upper hand frustrated the hopes of the developing countries that a new era of genuine solidarity between the rich and the poor was about to emerge and serve the legitimate interests of all the members of the international Community.

As we see it, the economic and social situation in most countries of the South gives no cause for hope or optimism. The gap between developed and developing countries is still widening, and the economic, commercial, and social problems of the developing countries are only worsening. This has thrown the doors wide open to such phenomena as extremism, fanaticism and terrorism, scourges that we must confront and curb.

In order for us to do so, the world economy has to be restructured in the context of genuine cooperation between all nations and an earnest dialogue in which the rich countries would shoulder their full responsibilities towards the promotion of an international partnership whose aim should be to find viable solutions to this problem that would work in favour of men's moral and material interests, wherever they may be: North or South.

While we welcome the initiatives taken towards the restructuring of the world economy since the ratification of the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade and the subsequent inception of the World Trade Organization, and the steps taken by numerous developing nations, including Morocco, to restructure their economies with a view to integrating those economies into the world economy, we believe that such initiatives, by themselves, will not be sufficient to lead to solutions to the economic, trade and financial problems that beset the third world. We hope that the World Trade Organization will adequately and fully discharge its responsibilities and that it will be provided with the necessary means that would make it an effective tool and enable it to translate into reality the commitments made.

We hope that the current negotiations amongst the various international organizations concerned will lead to the desired coordination between monetary, financial and trade policies and thereby lead to the laying of genuine foundations for free international trade, wherein there would be no deterioration in the terms of trade or any decline in the prices of primary commodities. We also hope that those discussions will mark the beginning of a reconsideration of the concept of foreign debt from which the developing countries suffer.

The African continent is in the grip of a disastrous economic and social situation. Morocco views with concern the deterioration of this situation as it is part of the African continent, and is a member of the African family that has a long history of shared struggle for liberation and emancipation which binds it to all the peoples of Africa.

Given the gravity of a situation, that portends untold tragedies, Morocco calls on the international community to make a concerted effort to find a solution to the worsening problems of Africa.

In our opinion, the strategic perspective and the approach adopted so far in tackling those problems will not lead to any improvement or substantial qualitative change so long as the international community does not commit itself to a long-term strategy that embodies concrete commitments in favour of Africa. Such a strategy, as we see it, should be part of a comprehensive perspective aimed at improving the level of social and economic development in Africa with a view to integrating the continent into the world economy and enabling it to benefit from its dividends. In this respect, Morocco calls for a speeding up of the implementation of the Convention to combat desertification in order to meet the needs of our continent at both the national and international levels.

In spite of the efforts made by the United Nations and repeated calls from this rostrum to give pride of place to dialogue, and to solve conflicts by peaceful means and preventive diplomacy, some regions in the world continue to be the scene of armed conflicts and civil wars which crush our hopes of establishing lasting peace and security. By the same token, the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, especially nuclear weapons, still threatens our world and should be addressed most earnestly in order to avoid irreparable disasters.

In this respect Morocco has effectively contributed to the indefinite extension of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) and hopes that all countries will accede to this important Treaty and thereby ensure its universality. Morocco also hopes that the Middle East will be exempt from all weapons of mass destruction, as has been the case for other regions of the world. This is one of the noble objectives that the Organization should work for so that all may channel the funds tied up in this field to development and to combating all forms of underdevelopment.

It is indeed cause for optimism that progress has been made in the negotiations on the test-ban treaty, especially the pledge made by the Conference on Disarmament to conclude a treaty concerning this issue before the end of 1996.

The era of colonialism is now a thing of the past. As a matter of fact, this has been one of the great achievements of the past 50 years. Unfortunately however, the two Moroccan cities of Sebta and Melilia and the neighbouring islands are still under Spanish occupation. These enclaves, which are part and parcel of Moroccan territory, and which overlook the Mediterranean sea, are thus the last remaining colonies in Africa. Such a situation is indeed a strange anomaly which neither reason nor logic can accept and which clashes head on with the spirit and the letter of the United Nations Charter.

In this context, may I recall the major stages which Morocco has gone through in order to complete its territorial integrity. Since its independence in 1956, Morocco started negotiations with Spain in order to complete its independence, hence the withdrawal, in 1958, from the region of Tarfaya, which is part of the Moroccan Sahara, then the withdrawal from the region of Sidi Ifni in 1969. In 1975, after a period of alternating dialogue and tension, Morocco recovered its other southern provinces. The only parts that are still under Spanish colonization are Sebta and Melilia and the neighbouring islands.

Morocco, which opted for dialogue as a fundamental principle in its policy *vis-à-vis* its neighbours, propounded that principle in international forums as the best means of avoiding armed conflict and sought to settle all problems by peaceful means, remains convinced that its historical ties with Spain, coupled with the two countries' common economic interests, will help overcome the difficulties that stand in the way of a solution to this dispute.

Morocco considers Spain to be one of its most important economic and political partners in view of the size of Spain's investments in Morocco, the volume of trade between the two countries, the joint development projects, such as the intercontinental link between Spain and Morocco that would link the African and European continents, as well as the burgeoning cooperation in the areas of culture and tourism.

We are convinced that if all this is taken into account, it would help resolve the disputes. We believe that the best framework for the desired settlement is to be found in the proposal made to Spain by His Majesty King Hassan II, to set up a reflection and consultation committee with the aim of finding a solution to the problem of Sebta and Melilia that would allow Morocco to exercise its sovereignty over the two cities and the neighbouring islands while preserving Spain's economic interests.

The Arab Maghreb Union has made considerable progress on the road to Maghreb unity. Morocco, which, like its neighbours, believes that the Union is a strategic choice, is determined to overcome the few remaining obstacles in the way of progress towards unity. In this era of economic blocs, the creation of the Arab Maghreb Union is an unavoidable necessity if regional integration is to be achieved, if challenges are to be met and if we are to ensure the progress and prosperity of our peoples, who are united by the bonds of common language, religion and history.

I am sure that idea of establishing the Arab Maghreb Union, which reflects an ancient historical reality, will come to fruition as have other regional blocs that have achieved a high level of integration and unity even without enjoying the bonds that unite the Arab Maghreb Union.

In recent years, the Middle East has witnessed many developments that have created an opportunity to achieve peace and to end the Arab-Israeli conflict on the basis of the principles of land for peace, respect for the national and political rights of the Palestinian people and the establishment of their own State, with Al Quds as its capital.

One of the decisive events in the region was the conclusion of the Israeli-Palestinian Agreement signed at Washington D.C., which confirmed that the peace process in the region is irreversible, notwithstanding the obstacles it is encountering. The Jordanian-Israeli

agreement also confirmed that the logic of tolerance and coexistence in the framework of a just, lasting and comprehensive peace based on international legality is now an absolute necessity for all.

In this connection we welcome with satisfaction the Taba Agreement that was signed in Washington D.C. between the Palestinians and the Israelis, an important milestone on the road towards the establishment of peace and security in the region. It is our fervent hope that the two parties will be able to overcome existing obstacles and show a firm determination to settle pending problems, bearing in mind the legitimate interests of all and respecting their commitments and the behests of international legality.

Optimistic as we are about the progress on the Israeli-Jordanian and the Israeli-Palestinian tracks, we hope that positive development will materialize on the Israeli-Syrian and Israeli-Lebanese tracks which would lead to results acceptable to all parties on the basis of the relevant resolutions of the United Nations Security Council and General Assembly, particularly Security Council resolutions 242 (1967), 338 (1973) and 425 (1978).

Last year, in an attempt to promote the peace process in the region, Morocco acted as host to the very first Economic Summit for the Middle East and North Africa, which stressed the need to establish economic programmes as part of an effective partnership that would create better living conditions for the peoples of those regions. The Summit also emphasized the need to assist economic development in Palestine to enable the Palestinian people to promote their economic and developmental institutions and to participate on an equal footing in the development of the region.

We hope that the Amman Summit will be another milestone in the mobilization of the potential of public and private sectors to consolidate the peace process by promoting economic cooperation to help in the region's development and by meeting the aspirations of the peoples of that region after progress, prosperity and just and lasting peace.

The United Arab Emirates and the Islamic Republic of Iran have not yet arrived at a final settlement of their dispute over the future of the islands of Abu Musa and Greater and Lesser Tumbs. In light of our historical relations with those two sisterly countries, and given the relations of neighbourliness and friendship between the peoples of the United Arab Emirates and Iran, we look forward the day when there will be a final solution to this dispute so that the region may revert to the spirit of coexistence that once characterized it.

The tragedy of the Bosnian people is almost without precedent in the history of mankind. It is even more alarming in light of the international community's failure to stand up against murders, displacement of populations, ethnic and religious cleansing, mass rape and the destruction of the country's culture heritage and civilization.

It is regrettable that the world should be witnessing such procrastination under the new world order, which purports to be founded on respect for human rights. It is also somewhat amazing that that new world order, which had mustered all its resources to extinguish every hot spot outside the Western world, should now fail to protect a people in the very heart of Europe who are daily being subjected to Serb aggression.

Morocco, which had been under the impression that the problem of Bosnia and Herzegovina would be settled in 1992, was surprised at the deterioration of the situation there and by the escalation of violence and massacres. In this connection, Morocco has consistently discharged its human and Islamic duty to defend the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina, mitigate the agony of the Bosnian people and provide humanitarian assistance to them.

I am convinced that the meeting of the Islamic and International Contact Groups in Paris on 7 September 1995 and the meeting that took place between the two groups yesterday, 28 September 1995, are likely to open the way to coordination and consultation to achieve the expected objectives and strengthen the foundations for peace in the region on the basis of justice and international law.

We welcome with hope the results of the 8 September 1995 meeting between the Bosnian, Serb and Croat ministers at Geneva.

We hope that the agreement in principle concluded by the parties to the conflict last Tuesday, 26 September 1995, in New York will be a decisive step towards alleviating the sufferings of the people of Bosnia and Herzegovina and that it will help them achieve their hopes for peace, tranquillity, sovereignty, safeguard the territorial integrity of the Republic of Bosnia-Herzegovina

and thus ensure peace, reconciliation and stability in the region.

With regard to the question of the so-called Western Sahara, Morocco took the initiative of proposing the organization of a referendum and accepted the settlement plan presented by the Secretary-General. Morocco also agreed on the criteria concerning voter identification and made serious efforts in full cooperation with the Secretary-General, the Security Council and the United Nations Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara (MINURSO). Morocco has also offered financial assistance and the necessary support to overcome difficulties and implement the settlement plan in good faith.

In view of the obstacles we are now encountering in connection with the identification process with regard to all persons of Saharan origin, we appeal to the Security Council to take the necessary measures and to mobilize all the appropriate means that would safeguard the settlement plan against collapse and remove the spectre of tension from the region.

I take this opportunity to renew our commitment and stress our firm determination to continue our full cooperation with the Secretary-General in order to complete all the procedures and take all necessary measures to organize the referendum early next year, as suggested by the Secretary-General in his latest report to the Security Council on the issue.

We hope that the fiftieth anniversary of our Organization will be an opportunity to study all the ideas and suggestions put forth in order to improve and redress the structures of our Organization so that, given all the changes in the world, it can meet the actual needs of the international community. I refer in particular to ideas regarding the enlargement of the Security Council and improvement of its working methods, which must be carefully considered and given ample time so that results can be achieved and a consensus can be reached.

We are confident that the perseverance and earnest determination we have shown in taking up challenges will be the best incentive for us to face up to the new challenge and enable our Organization to fulfil its duties adequately at the dawning of the twenty-first century, which we hope will be the beginning of a new era of peace, stability and life in dignity for humanity.

The Acting President (*interpretation from French*): On behalf of the General Assembly, I wish to thank the Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs and Cooperation of the Kingdom of Morocco for the statement he has just made.

Mr. Abdellatif Filali, Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs and Cooperation of Morocco, was escorted from the rostrum.

The Acting President (*interpretation from French*): The next speaker is the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Zambia, His Excellency Mr. Christon Tembo, on whom I now call.

Mr. Tembo (Zambia): On this important occasion, allow me to extend to the President the congratulations of the people and the Government of Zambia upon his well-deserved election to preside over the work of the General Assembly at its fiftieth session. We are confident that his broad experience and ability will afford us sure guidance at this historic session of the General Assembly, which marks half a century of the United Nations.

I would also like to pay tribute to the outgoing President of the General Assembly at its forty-ninth session, His Excellency Mr. Amara Essy of Côte d'Ivoire, who so successfully presided over the session with great skill and expertise. He leaves the presidency with a record of successes that has enhanced the Assembly's deliberative role.

My delegation would also like to put on record its appreciation for the Secretary-General, His Excellency Mr. Boutros Boutros-Ghali, who has continued to lead the Organization with skill and tenacity under trying circumstances.

As we observe and celebrate the fiftieth anniversary of the founding of the United Nations, we should also take this opportunity to take stock of the Organization's past performance, evaluating its achievements and failures, and then proceed to map out our future direction.

It cannot be disputed that the United Nations has made outstanding contributions to world peace and security and the promotion of development throughout the world.

The United Nations has conducted successful peace-keeping operations in various parts of the world, including Cambodia, Mozambique, Haiti and, very recently, Angola.

It is also as a result of United Nations engagement that the world is now entering an era in which the ideals of human rights and democracy are gaining support in many countries. The United Nations is on record as having provided electoral assistance to over 40 countries. This has gone a long way in ensuring free and fair elections.

The United Nations has been a strong source of relief from human suffering. Through the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, the United Nations has provided food, shelter, medicine and education for millions of refugees the world over.

Very recently, in 1990, through the efforts of our Secretary-General, Mr. Boutros Boutros-Ghali, and the personal dedication to children of the late James Grant, the World Summit for Children was convened here in New York, where the Convention on the Rights of the Child was adopted. This Convention has become the first to receive universal acceptance. This is a remarkable achievement in itself.

Against this background of achievements, the Organization has had to deal with many formidable problems, such as the super-Power rivalry of the cold-war era, which resulted in a long period of paralysis in terms of the Organization's ability to take quick and effective decisions and in the increasing number of ethnic conflicts and tensions around the world, as evidenced by conflicts in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Rwanda, Burundi, Somalia and Georgia, among others.

The continued unfavourable international economic situation and environmental degradation are serious challenges that the United Nations has had to deal with.

Zambia is convinced that the United Nations remains the only world body with the capacity to galvanize political will to face these challenges as we approach the twenty-first century. As a country and Member State, we take this opportunity to reaffirm and renew our commitment to the United Nations.

It is quite clear that the United Nations will require a renewed vision for the next 50 years. The agenda to disarm throughout the world is not complete. My delegation strongly feels that as long as there is continued proliferation of weapons, there can never be any hope for lasting peace and security in any corner of the world.

My delegation, therefore, welcomes the successful conclusion, early this year, of the Review and Extension Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT); the Treaty was extended indefinitely. My delegation wishes to express our grave concern that, soon after the extension, some of the signatories to the NPT have resumed nuclear tests. This is not in the spirit of nuclear disarmament. We also congratulate those that have continued to observe their moratoriums and hope that they will not be swayed by those that are embarking on nuclear testing.

Zambia takes note of the ongoing negotiations in Geneva on a comprehensive nuclear-test-ban treaty (CTBT), and urges a speedy and successful completion of that treaty. We also welcome the efforts to strengthen the Biological and Toxic Weapons Convention.

However, in spite of all these positive developments in the area of disarmament, there are, of course, other critical areas, such as complete and general disarmament, nuclear technology, nuclear-weapon-free zones, mine clearance as well as peaceful uses of nuclear energy, that remain unresolved. We therefore urge all concerned to give special attention to such issues, in the hope that this will enhance security guarantees.

The issue of specific concern to southern Africa, which has emerged from a long period of conflict, is land mine clearance. Many of our people continue to die from uncleared land mines. Accordingly, we call upon the international community to increase its support for the regional efforts being carried out through the Southern African Development Community to de-mine the affected areas in the southern Africa region. In this regard, we wish to express our appreciation to the European Union, which continues to support our efforts in mine clearance.

In the area of peace-keeping, Zambia realizes that pursuing peace has not been an easy task for the United Nations and is not likely to be so in the foreseeable future. The Organization needs a clear vision of what must be done in each particular case. The Secretary-General's Agenda for Peace, we believe, provides that vision. It is an important agenda, which has already assisted in many areas of our peace-keeping operations.

We are aware that a quick and effective response in time of conflicts depends on a number of important factors, especially the political will by the Member States to meet resource requirements. In this respect, Zambia supports the establishment of a rapid- reaction-capability force, which we believe will enhance peace-keeping operations and save lives.

The protection, promotion and enjoyment of human rights is an obligation Governments and peoples the world over must uphold. The dignity of life cannot be enhanced without full observance of human rights. Zambia therefore believes that the United Nations must continue to give high priority to human rights issues.

In this regard, Zambia is gratified that the Fourth World Conference on Women, recently held in Beijing, China, recognized that women's rights are human rights, and that Governments committed themselves to the implementation of that human rights agenda.

The Beijing conference and the other recent United Nations conferences — the World Conference on Human Rights, the International Conference on Population and Development and the World Social Summit — will all need active and integrated follow-up throughout the United Nations system. In this follow-up, the roles of the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council are crucial not only for the efficient implementation of the programmes of action, but also for strengthening the Organization in the social and economic fields. Zambia recognizes the urgent need to revitalize the Council's functions, including improved and enhanced utilization of its various functional committees. Harmonization of institutional arrangements in the entire United Nations system will need to be undertaken as a matter of priority.

In terms of the reform of the Security Council, Zambia believes it is necessary to expand the Security Council to enable it to become more representative. It is also our view that the Security Council needs to become democratic and transparent.

Zambia would like to see the United Nations give priority to addressing developmental issues in the new millennium. In this regard, I wish to state that Zambia attaches great importance to the realization of the Agenda for Development. Development is a critical area of concern for my own continent, Africa, where poverty, unemployment and social exclusion affect virtually every country. As we approach the twenty-first century, the international community should give added emphasis to the fight against poverty. By fighting poverty, we can assure the progress of individuals, which is essential to the sustained progress of all nations.

Zambia is therefore gratified that the World Summit for Social Development committed itself to accelerating the economic, social and human resources development of Africa and the least developed countries. The World Summit for Social Development, held in Copenhagen, Denmark, in March this year, has, through its Declaration and Programme of Action, challenged Governments the world over to create opportunities through employment generation and social integration that should eradicate poverty. My delegation hopes that Governments will implement its Programme of Action.

The poverty obtaining in many developing countries is being exacerbated by the onerous debt burdens most of these countries have continued to carry since the early 1980s. The Naples terms, with the potential to achieve a 67 per cent debt reduction on either export credits or debt service, is only the beginning in offering durable debt relief to developing countries, especially with regard to those with very high debt service ratios. The creditor countries should move beyond modesty and offer terms that can in the shortest possible time frame reduce debt service ratios of the poorest developing countries to 21 per cent of their export earnings. This is the level recognized by the United Nations as the basic minimum requirement to ensure that the poorest developing countries overcome their debt problems and re-establish credit-worthiness. Coupled with the sustained underfunding of many structural adjustment programmes, a modest approach on promoting debt reduction can only have the ultimate result of undermining opportunities for growth, development and prosperity in developing countries.

As the World Trade Organization begins its formative years, a new challenge from this institution is emerging in developing countries that will add to the challenges of external debt burdens and poverty. This is the challenge of registering early net losses from the new system of multilateral trade as preferences are removed, food prices rise, subsidies decrease and commodity exports continue to face marginalization. This is especially pronounced for Africa, which, as we all know, has already recorded more than a decade of austerity. While we recognize the long-term opportunities developing countries will gain from the World Trade Organization, it still remains the duty of developed countries to make good their pledges reaffirmed at Marrakesh to compensate net losers in the new system of multilateral trade, by quickly specifying the terms of compensation.

Zambia realizes that establishing the foundations of international competitiveness is the key to getting a foothold in the world economy. Our reform measures, which started in 1991, are gaining momentum. The

challenge now is to move away from concerns over stabilization and liberalization to the stimulation of production, employment and labour productivity as the basic foundations for poverty reduction. This is being done at the same time as we are building on complementarities already established in the regional integration mechanisms of the Southern African Development Community and the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa, of which Zambia is a member. However, our domestic reform efforts can only be sustained by generous debt reduction that improves our cash-flow position to levels which regenerate business confidence in Zambia. The debt overhang remains the single biggest barrier to recovery and development in Zambia.

In conclusion, I would like to state that Zambia will remain actively committed to achieving these priorities in the framework of the United Nations. We believe in the United Nations and have every confidence that our Organization will lead us into a new era of full of hope and prosperity.

The Acting President (*interpretation from French*): I now call on the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Venezuela, His Excellency Mr. Miguel Angel Burelli Rivas.

Mr. Burelli Rivas (Venezuela) (*interpretation from Spanish*): Everything that could be said has been said during this annual routine, in which each Head of State or Government, or Minister, stands before the United Nations General Assembly. If all the speeches were to be published in a compendium, the same universal themes would be repeated a thousand times.

The compendium would include the great, insoluble problems that, to various degrees, afflict the peoples of every continent, as well as the solutions that have already been found, and the promised solutions implicit in the constant efforts of this Organization, which, like any other human endeavour, has lived through 50 years of triumphs and frustration.

We must rejoice that, thanks to the Organization's vigilance and action, we have enjoyed — as never before — half a century of peace, although we lament the fact that we must now deploy efforts against violence born of intolerance, fanaticism and ethnic or religious strife that frustrate the achievement of the harmony for which mankind yearns.

Alongside the impressive achievements of the world community, these 50 years have also seen numerous local conflicts that have taken 23 million lives. Eighty seven per cent of the weapons sold and used in the world come from the five countries that are permanent members of the Security Council. And, unbelievable as it might seem, at this stage of our political evolution, two atomic Powers are causing anxiety with inexplicable nuclear tests for which we criticized other Powers.

But who can deny that in the fields of health, technology, environment, human rights, communications, the exploitation of the resources of the seas and many other fields, there is progress and hope, and at least a warning that awakens the universal conscience?

Today's statement by the Foreign Minister of Venezuela will be no different. Political scenarios change, as do ideologies, the most extraordinary crisis in history erupts, but life's dramas continue, with man bruised by change, but for the first time wavering between hope and bewilderment. This situation results from the fact that we have rushed from one era to another without the demolition caused by war, although we have had the enthusiastic and confident contribution of students and workers, who have devoted their free time to making it.

We note hardly any curiosity about the era we are approaching, an era as yet unnamed, though soon to be upon us it could be called anything: "post-capitalist", "post-socialist" or "post-industrial"; or it could simply be described as a time of transition between two periods that our generations share.

There has been talk, of course, of the end of history, with the end of ideological confrontation; that is precisely what makes history: incessant conflicts and passionate confrontations, fears and hopes, freedom and deprivation of freedom, in any of the forms of oppression that have always been applied.

Man today has the vague feeling that he is in contact with all other men through the miracle of the media, fibre optics, and cybernetic systems, and yet, now that there are more human beings with whom solidarity may be felt, solidarity is more precarious and man's loneliness is more poignant.

To create a different world based on a solid, complex and long-lasting Organization that has been taking shape since the end of the First World War, we

have begun to talk — since we want words to describe what is going on — of globalization, of integration, of the abolition of the nation-State and its replacement by large blocs, in order to produce through strength of numbers and unity a new dynamic different from military might.

Let us suppose, then, that the world of the future will have to be shaped according to regions, or large integrated groups or communities, regional or otherwise, that have a common cultural origin and wish to be identified with the others, because of the particular characteristics of their culture, such as tradition, language, religion and even mixed blood.

This is what strikes me, as I now appear for the first time before so distinguished a forum to speak on behalf of a country such as mine — a country with a modest economy, a small population, a territory that is medium-sized but which, owing to its excellent geographical situation, developed more than others; a culture of social freedom, of mixed races and of political independence, achieved by means of an epic struggle, not only for itself but for all of its American neighbours. Mine is a country that has never been at war with anyone, a country whose desire to see its neighbours freed from colonialism gave impetus to, and is inspiring, the brand-new Caribbean community, for instance. It is a country that, as we have proved time and again, will support and promote any initiative aimed at pacification in the region, as we did today in the Group of Friends of Guatemala, for example, and when we welcomed the latest agreement between Israel and the Palestinians.

Venezuela, like other countries, has been shaken — in our case since 1989 — by a severe crisis. Not so much economic or political as ethical in nature, this crisis has weakened our institutions and undermined our financial system, the collapse of which cost us 16 per cent of our gross national product and has attracted the not-always-understanding attention of international opinion.

This is the crisis that our Government inherited. Aware that its characteristics are atypical in our region, since its basic goal is to replace a paternalistic, oil-dependent model by an open culture based on work and self-reliance rather than on seeking the understanding of other countries, our Government is proceeding to solve our nation's problems, which, fortunately, are no match for our diverse and solid economic resources.

Venezuela is a country that has simultaneously — as if by magic — produced great thinkers, the most credible Utopians, the luckiest generals, the most visionary educators. My country, situated at the northern gate of South America, freed itself and other countries by following the dreams of Francisco de Miranda, brought to fruition by Simón Bolivár and Antonio José de Sucre, by systematic thinking and by the actions of Andrés Bello and Simón Rodríguez, among other well-known figures.

Simón Bolívar was clear-sighted. In that nebulous period of history that was the year 1815, he set out, from Jamaica — in the most famous political document of this part of the world — a dazzling prophecy of what the ideal destiny of Hispanic America was to be. To this day, no one can understand how he thought it up. He wrote:

> "It is a grandiose idea to try to make of the entire new world a single nation, with only one link to bind and tie together all the parts to the whole."

Once independence was achieved, he foresaw that an imperfect and erratic unity, such as that of the South, could be thrown off balance by the organization of the former 13 American colonies, whose integration he already anticipated. He also foresaw the power of the hard-working, driven race that would consolidate on the American continent the formidable and admirable nation that the United States has become, with its transcendent and unique feeling of liberty, since its founders left behind all prejudices and fears.

Bolívar visualized uniting the American half that was discovered, populated and moulded in all its aspects by Spain and Portugal, seeing it as one that must necessarily have its own way of life and of behaving. His vision was never based on rivalry, but rather, in keeping with his views on the destiny of this shared hemisphere, on the basis of emulation and friendship instead of strife as its driving force.

The colonizing Powers contributed, and based this half of America on, all they had brought with them. They established a religion, a society reminiscent of the offspring of settlers, whose physical surroundings and indiscriminate crossbreeding gave rise to a feeling of unfettered freedom and equality. This, in turn, engendered irrevocably an equally free spirit of social democracy, which Latin America has never since lacked, not even during the long periods when political democracy was non-existent.

In 1826, Bolívar, the Liberator, convened the Congress of Panama to speak there, for the first time in

history, not of sacred or profane alliances of war, but of alliances for peace. The thoughts he presented gave rise to the idea of an organized international community, first of all for the Americas, through the Pan-American Union, which in turn gave rise to the present Organization of American States (OAS), then to the League of Nations and finally to this Organization, which has given humanity, together with peace, all the possibilities that peace offers.

This is an exceptional community, the largest in the world, since it extends from the southern border of the United States all the way south to Patagonia, uniting the greatest number of peoples and republics with similar characteristics. Here, the various languages spoken in Spain fortunately became one, revitalizing the Castilian tongue, and similarly, the Portuguese language, which in Brazil is a language as open and soft as America itself. In the northernmost point of America, the imprint of France in Canada, as well as the Hispanic minority in the United States, are living reminders of this community.

In geographical terms, we are larger than other official communities, since the United States' surface area covers 9,372,000 square kilometres and Europe's covers 10,404,000 square kilometres. But we cover 20,000,000 square kilometres, and in these, the future of humanity is pulsing.

In political and spiritual terms, we are history's largest laboratory, at once a mystery and a promise — an absolute wonder that the future is revealing day by day. The seed of a new world, different from our expectations, is growing among us.

We are not the only five hundred million human beings to be allergic to the discrimination that will confront us in the year 2000. But we are the only human group to have been born and moulded without privileges, hesitations or complexes, on an equal footing. Though this sense of equality was repressed for three centuries by pragmatic measures that were respected but not implemented, and by the extreme zeal of monks who consulted no one in imposing a single faith on this immense geographical area, it was imbued with the spaciousness of the land, the rivers, the forests, the gentle climate, the mountains and prairies, whose influence produced a different type of human character. And I would repeat that this deep feeling and sense of fundamental freedom was something that had never happened to any other group of people.

Germán Arciniegas rightly said that

> "America was colonized by a man who was destined to a life of servitude in Europe. He became emancipated when he crossed from one shore to the other ... These wretches worked the continent with their bare hands, they were the poor, the landless, the illiterate of the popular Renaissance. Uneducated, unenlightened, their common destiny was to join together to become nations and so achieve justice."

And justice was the most absolute independence, influenced by American determinism.

In his sociologist's discourse, Bolívar said that we Americans represent a small human race. We have now become an important branch of the broader human race: the branch of possibilities and hope.

Our region would not enter into conflict with any other; not even with the one with which it shares the hemisphere, and which speaks a different language and has different customs. It will not be another international agency, or form another bureaucracy, or take up more room than the enormous space of its present physical and human geography.

In other words, we aspire to a beautiful Utopia, with no other pragmatism than the pride of being a Utopia with ever more solidarity; part of the universe with shared values, in search of the same destiny.

If other continents fashion communities around religious, racial or geopolitical banners, it is natural that we, Latin Americans, put forth ours with our own immense, protean sense of unity.

There was a time, as we followed a different cultural pattern, when we had a more orderly society and enjoyed political systems that brought us fame throughout the world. Practically all Latin American countries experienced a sort of golden age of culture and politics, marked by originality. We created literature. We forged our own laws with our own institutions. We pioneered the Law of the Sea; we produced the first system against nuclear weapons, with the Treaty of Tlatelolco.

A concerted Latin American community of nations would tend to recuperate and exchange training and educational systems capable of affirming our collective pride and personality, as Europe has already done, despite the diversity of its components, out of fear of the return of thousands of years of violence. Morally, the

Latin American community would be equal to the commercial and economic commitments made through ALADI, the Latin American Integration Association, as well as the Andean Pact, the Central American Common Market and MERCOSUR, all designed to form a front of solidarity and a crucial link in the economic integration of the universe.

A conscious Latin American community of nations would guarantee the sustainable development of the world's most varied and richest ecological systems, and would conceive not only of the larger spaces, but also of the importance of drinking water, of mining resources, and of the most varied and richest flora and fauna on the face of the earth.

Of course, we bring before the United Nations the many concerns that we have expressed about the fate of our Organization which, in its 50 years of arbitrating peace, has charted a new path for the peoples it represents. These concerns have prompted talk of reforming the Charter, in order for the Security Council, for instance, to take up and represent new geopolitical realities, and not only military might. This is the spirit in which my country, through the voice of its President, Rafael Caldera, has realistically and frankly proposed that Brazil be the permanent representative of Latin America in an enlarged Security Council. We have also spoken of the justification of agencies and powers, to make the cost of peace less burdensome; of the urgent need to adapt the Economic and Social Council to the necessities of our time, as well as the Council for Culture, Science and Technology, that is still the monopoly of industrialized centres. If a common market for technology were to be established, we would be truly keeping pace with history.

In America, although less than in Africa and Asia, we too are disturbed by the growing marginalization, the social injustice, the poverty bordering on famine, the insecurity exacerbated by the trade in illicit drugs and its consequences, which we witness. We produce terrible drugs in ever greater quantities to satisfy the voracity of the consumer markets. But, at the same time, we fight this scourge with the greatest tenacity and determination.

Our community has had the virtue of becoming practically a breeding ground for democracy, thanks to the steadfastness of its leaders and thinkers, as well as of the oldest but least championed regional organization. We must now see to it that democracy is purged of its dishonesty, and is cleansed. To this end, at the Hemispheric Summit in Miami, my Government proposed, with unanimous support, to put a stop to the impunity of corruption.

We consider that drug trafficking and political corruption are linked together by money laundering, under the cover of electoral contributions.

If democracy is to acquire a new respectability, it will be thanks to the common, concerted effort of America; an effort which this world Organization will also be called upon to make in the near future. That is because political corruption, a manifestation of the universal mafia, is not exclusive to our region and must be fought at the global level, just like illicit drug trafficking.

Very shortly, a world congress against corruption will be held in China, doubtless inspired by our example. We hold out great expectations for that congress. Indeed, we are keenly interested in anything that is sponsored and advanced by this Organization.

But I wanted to put before the Assembly the somewhat romantic idea of a Latin American Utopia, that it might inspire confidence in our neighbours in this hemisphere and hope in all other regions, whether on an organized basis or not. This is the spirit in which the Rio Group has endorsed the oft-repeated proposal for a Latin American Parliament.

Since the first Great War there has been a dislocation in Europe, which conveyed itself through Spain and Portugal; its aesthetic sense of life and existence through Italy; its modes of thought and philosophy through France; its political models through Great Britain and its lasting technologies through Germany. A regrettable dislocation occurred between Europe and Latin America, which is truly its most kindred continent, where we live as distant cousins, and still the most vibrant and promising offshoot of this lineage.

If we underscore the need to encourage this idea of our community, it is because it exists, in fact, although it is now beset with social problems that require combined treatment. It also has a legalist existence, since States such as Brazil, Colombia, Ecuador, Peru, Uruguay and Venezuela have incorporated it into their political constitutions.

The greatest tragedy of Latin America is its social condition, because of the imbalances characteristic of any

large society — irregularities in family patterns, deficiencies in education, the destruction of homes due to a lack of ethics — even housing, which was never one of our biggest problems, has become one, because it is linked to a sense of ethics at the family level. They are inseparably linked.

We could say, along with Arturo Uslar Pietri that, caught as we are between the millstones that grind the political universe, we have given more thought to building republics than to perfecting the nation that we are.

In spite of all its faults, the United Nations — the Organization we aspired to and wish to maintain — has created a civilization. It is responsible for over 300 international treaties: for the consolidation of democracy; for the dedicated protection of refugees; for self-determination, freedom, independence, the dignity of life, the arts, traditions; for coexistence — even if the phantoms of intolerance reappear; for trade free of protectionism; for children, women and our indigenous populations. And this, beyond civilization, we can call the new culture of the human family.

The Organization has grown and expanded since 1945, and the world with it. Its many offspring, scattered among the five continents and virtually all of them free, have led to a membership quadruple the number of the founding Members, among them Venezuela, which was represented then by its great Minister Caracciolo Parra Pérez. At that time he voiced an idea that has even greater validity today:

> "The peoples of the world must know each other morally and spiritually before they can manage to dispel the distrust and ignorance which keep them apart. We must build up a kind of intellectual network, above the network of the physical communications system which exists between nations, or parallel to it." (*Official Records of the United Nations Conference on International Organization, 7th plenary meeting, p. 23*)

This Organization's greatest achievement has been to offer the world a span of half a century during which, despite remaining fears, it could think of a new course for harmonizing all aspects of the life of societies with the nature that shelters those societies.

I congratulate the Organization and the President of the General Assembly, Mr. Diego Freitas do Amaral, in the hope that under his leadership the Organization will achieve all the success it deserves and needs. All races, all religions, all the most varied shades of humankind bring their aspirations and their claims here. This is an spacious home that has always endeavoured to live in the peace that is and must be the normal condition of life. It has been said that if health is the peace of the body, peace is the health of peoples. In that connection, the pre-Socratic philosopher wrote that in times of peace people awake to the crowing of roosters, while in times of war they waken to the clamour of arms; in peace the young bury the old, while in war the old bury the young.

The Acting President (*interpretation from French*): I call next on the First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs of Kuwait, His Excellency Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah.

Sheikh Al-Sabah (Kuwait) (*interpretation from Arabic*): It gives me great pleasure, on behalf of the delegation of Kuwait, to convey to Mr. Diego Freitas do Amaral our sincere congratulations on his unanimous election to the presidency of the fiftieth session of the General Assembly. We have no doubt that his election is testimony to his expertise and skills, which will guarantee the able stewardship of this historic session. I assure Mr. Freitas do Amaral of the support and cooperation of the delegation of the State of Kuwait.

I take this opportunity to commend the President of the General Assembly at its forty-ninth session, His Excellency Mr. Amara Essy, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Côte d'Ivoire, for his significant contribution to the work of this world body as well as for the wisdom he demonstrated as he presided over the deliberations of the last session.

Let me also pay tribute to the Secretary-General, His Excellency Mr. Boutros Boutros-Ghali, for his immense efforts to streamline the structure and operations of the United Nations with an eye to the constantly changing modern world. Also, I should like to put on record Kuwait's support for the proposals put forward by the Secretary-General in his programme of action to deal with potential crises, the use of preventive diplomacy and the modalities of peacemaking and peace-building. In this context, special mention should be made of the Secretary-General's annual report on the work of the Organization, which demonstrates incisive vision combined with a dispassionate and in-depth analysis of the challenges facing the United Nations. The report outlines in a responsible fashion the failures suffered in some of the activities and operations undertaken by the Organization.

Next month, a great number of Heads of States or Governments will come to New York City to celebrate the fiftieth anniversary of the establishment of the United Nations. This massive presence will reflect a genuine belief in the role of the United Nations in building a world founded on justice, equality, coexistence and cooperation, free of tension and aggression. Their statements in this Assembly Hall will no doubt define their vision of the tasks the United Nations should undertake, their hopes for the ideal way of life that should prevail in the world and their determination to spare no effort in working for a better world. We cherish the wisdom of the founding fathers who established an Organization that embodies mankind's collective effort and hope in a better world that would differ from the world of war and strife, which wrought enormous destruction in terms of geopolitical entities, property and human life. States were destroyed and entire human populations were annihilated to satisfy the capricious whims of individuals who were driven by greed and hegemony. The scale of sacrifice and devastation, and the toll in human life caused by the development of atomic weapons was too immense to ignore. In the wake of such destruction, the world's leaders were determined to make the Second World War the last war the world should ever endure.

The signing ceremony of the United Nations Charter in San Francisco was, in a sense, a universal pledge to renounce the use of force, to embrace peaceful coexistence and to shun the power politics of blackmail and hegemony.

Regardless, the world continued to live thereafter in an environment that differed from the vision of the founding fathers of the United Nations. The intense bipolar strife that followed plunged the world in the maelstrom of a cold war that lasted for some five decades and spawned numerous regional conflicts with which the United Nations dealt within the constraints imposed by big Power rivalries. The inability to act was not due to impotence on the part of the United Nations but was the direct result of that bipolar rivalry. Notwithstanding, the Organization did manage to demonstrate its effectiveness in many a peace-keeping operation it undertook over the past decades and did manage to pacify many a volatile area.

In point of fact, experience has shown, over the past few decades, that the presence of the United Nations in the areas of tension did prevent the eruption of conflict and war in several flash points while its absence increased the chances of war. In all this, the United Nations has been a true reflection of the will of its Member States and, during the cold war, it provided a war-prevention mechanism by creating buffer zones between the belligerents. It was effective in containing tensions and in creating a climate of peaceful negotiation.

Over the years, the United Nations system has developed an array of effective and credible mechanisms, and gained wide-ranging experience and undoubted credibility that are employed to the common benefit of mankind. Over the past 50 years, since the adoption of its Charter, the United Nations has worked consistently to give real meaning to the dream of peoples all over the world, that of saving

> "succeeding generations from the scourge of war, which ... has brought untold sorrow to mankind" —

as expressed in the opening paragraph of the Charter. In large measure, the United Nations has lived up to its initial commitment.

Once the cold-war chapter was closed, the world started to edge towards rapprochement and meaningful dialogue. Once the arms race ended, an intense development-race started. The territorial-gains mentality gave way to a new commitment to intensive human development. Thus the new challenge facing our world now is the fulfilment of the immediate concerns of the human person and his or her right to live in dignity.

The world was an arena of rivalry between the super-Powers; now it has become a vast battlefield in the war against poverty and backwardness. The world was a battleground for fighting between various blocs in different regions; now many regions are closing ranks in a common effort to combat illiteracy and want. While the world was the theatre of many a battle, now the world has but one battle, that of trying to break loose from the grip of underdevelopment and backwardness.

We in Kuwait were in the forefront of donors for development. The volume of assistance we offered was the highest, in terms of gross national product, because we wanted to live in a world dominated by justice, a world whose hallmark is human compassion, a world in which the privileged will reach out towards the underprivileged without strings attached.

Along these lines, Kuwait welcomes the trend towards the consolidation of relations between members of the family of nations on the basis of equality. We are part of a common effort to eliminate tensions. We rely on

the collective will of nations to suppress aggression, and on global cooperation to confront underdevelopment.

Against this backdrop, we cannot overlook the need for reform and restructuring inside the United Nations itself with a view to bringing the system more into line with these new objectives. In 1945, 50 founding Member States signed the Charter. Ever since, 135 other States have joined the membership. Regardless, the Security Council, which is a major organ of the system, has, for example, retained its original structure — without change to reflect the enormous expansion in the membership of the United Nations. Nor has the Economic and Social Council shown, as yet, significant improvement in programme delivery, as dictated by the requirements of modern development, in the broad sense of such requirements, at the threshold of the twenty-first century.

We call for expanding the membership of the Security Council in order to enable the larger membership of the United Nations to participate in the process of decision-making. The change, which would enhance fairness, should be effected in such a way as to ensure balance between the requirements of efficiency and of expansion. We also call for more transparency in the Council's methods of work, for this, in our view, would reinforce our sense of collective participation and responsibility. We are also in favour of the trend towards better use of the resources of those States that can contribute significantly to peace-keeping operations and development activities.

The people of Kuwait participate in the celebrations of the United Nations fiftieth anniversary with a deep sense of gratitude to the Organization for its crucial role in liberating Kuwait from occupation. The people of Kuwait recognize the firm resolve of the world community in rejecting aggression and its commitment to putting an end to occupation. We cherish the determination displayed in the series of successive resolutions adopted by the Security Council from the second day of August 1990, when the people of Kuwait, together with the rest of the world, were taken by surprise by the sneak invasion of the State of Kuwait by Iraq. That naked aggression was committed in total violation of the principles of the Charter of the United Nations and international treaties. Beyond Kuwait, the invasion totally shattered the security and stability of the entire Gulf region.

In facing up to that blatant aggression, the United Nations did indeed live up to its principles and was true to its mission. It did indeed stand firm in upholding justice and in defending the victim.

Building on the Kuwait experience, it is our hope that the critical role that the United Nations can play will be fully utilized to further consolidate the underpinning of peace and to safeguard security and stability. The United Nations system can indeed provide deterrence in the face of those regimes that harbour schemes of aggression. There is a full range of measures and restrictions that the United Nations can put in place to ensure the isolation and curtailment of those aggressive regimes and, if need be, to strip them of their stockpiles of weapons that can be used in committing aggression.

The ultimate goal of the United Nations is to ensure equality, mutual respect amongst Member States and respect for the will of peoples. This would be conducive to peaceful coexistence among nations and would create a favourable atmosphere allowing freedom of choice in a democratic climate, where the stronger cannot dominate the weaker, nor can a big country exploit a small neighbour, nor one party assume a privileged role to the detriment of others.

Over a long period — since the end of the Gulf war — the Iraqi regime has continued to claim that it has fulfilled all its obligations under all Security Council resolutions relating to the situation between Iraq and Kuwait, especially resolutions 687 (1991) and 715 (1991), and thus blamed the Security Council and the Special Commission for the delay in lifting the sanctions imposed on Iraq. The Chairman and staff of the Special Commission, as well as the Security Council itself, have been harshly and offensively criticized by senior Iraqi officials and the regime-controlled media.

In view of the recent dramatic surprises that unfolded in regard to the Iraqi armament programmes, a thoroughly legitimate set of questions arises — namely: Does the Iraqi regime have any more credibility? Who amongst us would be willing to accept Iraq's statements at face value? Who would believe its claims, echoed at every gathering or forum, that it had met its obligations? What about Kuwaiti property and military hardware looted from Kuwait? Who can go along with Iraq's assertions regarding Kuwaiti and third-country prisoners and hostages?

The tragedy of Kuwaiti and other prisoners held by Iraq remains unresolved four years after the liberation of Kuwait. This is due to the intransigence and procrastination of the Iraqi regime, which continues to sidestep a straightforward and genuine resolution of this human tragedy. This represents a failure on the part of

Iraq to fulfil its commitments under paragraph 30 of Security Council resolution 687 (1991), which demands that Iraq should cooperate fully with the International Committee of the Red Cross.

Accordingly, Kuwait reiterates its appeal, to the Security Council in particular and to the world community in general, to continue to bring pressure to bear on Iraq, in a bid to bring this painful episode to an end. Iraq's false claims and lies that it is sincere in its efforts to close this case should be met with a firm stand. Indeed, this was the only course of action that forced Iraq in the first place to cooperate with the Special Commission.

Iraq must recognize that participation in the meetings of the Tripartite Commission and its sub-committee is not an end in itself. The purpose of these meetings is to secure the freedom of prisoners and to account for the missing persons. The litmus test of Iraq's cooperation in this area is the number of persons released or accounted for. Mere attendance at those meetings is an exercise in subterfuge, intended by Iraq to mislead world public opinion and to circumvent its obligations.

The final objective of Kuwait's overall policy is to ensure security and stability in our region. This goal will remain elusive unless and until Iraq implements fully and unconditionally all relevant Security Council resolutions.

We are aware of the difficulties endured by the Iraqi people. However, the responsibility for the suffering of the Iraqis lies squarely on the regime itself which wasted valuable time since April 1991 in pursuing a futile course of prevarication, deception, suppression of data and misinformation in regard to every area of its mandatory obligations.

The most recent events came to confirm our suspicions and fears, namely, the disclosure of the possession by Iraq of an arsenal of prohibited weapons of mass destruction, which were being prepared for use against peoples of the region without heed for the potential massive loss of human life.

In the meantime, let me take this occasion to set on record that Kuwait affirms the need to maintain the unity and territorial integrity of Iraq. In view of the hardships faced by the Iraqi people, Kuwait has moved to send, through the Kuwait Red Crescent Society, food and medical supplies to the Iraqi civilian population in areas bordering Iran and in Northern Iraq. We will continue to pursue this policy on humanitarian grounds.

In the context of international endeavours to bring about just, durable and comprehensive peace in the Middle East, Kuwait follows closely the ongoing peace negotiations between the immediate parties. We support the negotiations process. In our view, this process should be anchored in the set of principles agreed upon, namely, full withdrawal in return for peace. Also, progress should be made on all tracks of negotiations. And the final peace package should be satisfactory to all sides because this would be the real guarantee of a lasting peace.

Kuwait did participate in the multilateral negotiations because we believed that our role within the multilaterals would strengthen the position of the Arab parties engaged in the bilateral talks and would eventually give momentum to the process as a whole. We fully appreciate the position of our sister State, Syria, which insists on full Israeli withdrawal from occupied Syrian territory in return for peace. Israel cannot attain full peace without complete withdrawal.

In the same vein, international efforts should intensify to ensure full implementation of Security Council resolution 425 (1978) which requires unconditional Israeli withdrawal from all Lebanese territory and the exercise by the Lebanese Government of its sovereignty over all Lebanese territory, including the South. In the end, the territorial integrity and independence of Lebanon must be preserved.

Furthermore, Kuwait supports the self-rule negotiations between the Palestine National Authority and Israel. In our view, the agreement signed yesterday in Washington, D.C. regarding the expansion of the self-rule arrangements represents an important step in the right direction towards the exercise by the people of Palestine of their right to self-determination and the establishment of their independent State.

In this regard, let me recall that Kuwait has pledged $25 million in aid to the development programmes undertaken by international specialized agencies in the self-rule areas. Indeed, Kuwait has started disbursement of funds earmarked for those purposes.

Also, we would like to underline the status of occupied Al-Quds, given its special significance to the three heavenly-revealed religions. We emphasize that Al-Quds is Palestinian territory under occupation and should as such be subject to the withdrawal conditions under Security Council resolution 242 (1967).

Kuwait welcomes the recent developments aiming at achieving a fair settlement of the situation in the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina. We expect such a settlement should satisfy the behests of international legality and be based on Security Council resolutions. In the wake of large-scale suffering, destruction and displacement, the people of the region now yearn for an overall settlement that satisfies the demands of all parties, especially the people of Bosnia and Herzegovina who insist on maintaining their independent State on their own territory without any interference from outside. My Government values the role played by the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) and the United Nations Protection Forces (UNPROFOR) in opposing territorial expansion by the Serbs at the expense of other parties, as well as the actions taken to lift the siege on Sarajevo. It is our hope that this joint NATO-UNPROFOR action will persist until the declared objective is attained, that is, the conclusion of a final accord that brings security and stability to the whole region. It is our sincere hope now that the most recent agreement reached several days ago will be honoured by the parties to the conflict.

Experience has shown that regional groupings and arrangements can play an effective role in addressing contentious issues that create tension, impact adversely on peace and security and poison the relations amongst the people of a given area. These groups have also demonstrated a great sense of commitment in defusing flash points of tension that might undermine regional security.

A case in point is the experience of the Gulf Cooperation Council whose member States are firmly convinced that understanding among them is crucial in steering away from frictions and tensions. To them, dialogue is an essential channel of confidence-building among neighbour States. Since our established policy considers negotiations as the only viable means of resolving disputes, we call upon the Islamic Republic of Iran to respond favourably to the call by the United Arab Emirates to resolve the problem of the islands occupied by Iran by the means suggested by the International Court of Justice. Such an approach would indeed reinforce the principle of understanding and negotiations to which we adhere as a primary component in relations among States.

Kuwait is convinced that world peace is indivisible and that it has far-reaching multiple implications on all of us. Accordingly, ethnic disputes, tribal wars and factional conflicts should be addressed as phenomena that can lead to massacres and genocides and to a total collapse of the afflicted communities. Therefore, in this year which marks the fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations, we ring down the curtain on the Rwanda tragedy before a solution is found, nor can we walk away from the catastrophe in Somalia, nor give up hope in the face of enormous odds in Afghanistan. All these remain burning issues despite the feeling by some Powers that they have moved outside the circle of global strategic limelight.

We call for scaling up the efforts and showing more determination in addressing these festering wounds within the framework of collective world peace.

The burden of debt is a major constraint on the budget resources of many nations, especially the developing ones. It aggravates their social problems and pushes up unemployment rates to a point where it undermines domestic security and stability and endangers the lives of millions of people.

Back in 1988, His Highness Sheikh Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber, Emir of the State of Kuwait, launched from this rostrum an initiative to write off the foreign debt under which many least developed countries were suffering. Those countries have been victims of a complex host of factors that denied them the privilege of a calm life and indeed posed a real threat to their very existence. Kuwait, for its part, cancelled all interest on loans to these countries in a bid to alleviate their debt burdens. It is our hope that this approach would be expanded and that the developed nations would cancel the interest on their loans to the developing countries.

The dreams of the Charter's authors stood the test of time and transcended the tensions and limitations of the cold war. The era of the cold war was characterized by the stockpiling of weapons of mass destruction to the detriment of construction needs. It represented a hard drive to acquire the means of annihilation at the expense of the means of development. Prestige was put ahead of real meaningful growth. Human ingenuity was put in the service of human exploitation rather than in the service of enhancing human freedoms. That chapter is now over. And we have entered a new epoch in which we have to heed the rational calls for civilized conduct in order to build up an atmosphere of genuine brotherhood and harmony. This can only be achieved by our collective endeavour that emphasizes our universal identity. Only through such a common effort can we pool together the resources and energy of all peoples, big and small, to achieve a strategic consensus that would translate into a reality the dreams envisioned 50 years ago when the Charter was signed.

The Acting President (*interpretation from French*): I now call on the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs of Croatia, His Excellency Mr. Mate Granic.

Mr. Granic (Croatia): Let me first extend my heartfelt congratulations to Mr. Freitas do Amaral of Portugal on his election to the distinguished office from which he will guide the work of the fiftieth session of the United Nations General Assembly. I am confident that his experience and commitment to the noble principles of the United Nations Charter will guarantee that this session will be marked by new vigour, commitment and determination. I wish to express our gratitude also to his predecessor, Mr. Amara Essy, for the fine, skilful manner in which he presided over the work of the last session of the General Assembly.

The world we live in has been deeply and positively affected by the end of the cold war and national emancipation in Central and Eastern Europe, and Western Asia. Many hotbeds of crisis have been extinguished or are on the way to being resolved, from Eastern Asia and South Africa to the Middle East.

Mr. Obadi (Yemen), Vice-President, took the Chair.

However, many problems having a negative impact on international relations remain unresolved, including the crisis in south-eastern Europe. Most disquieting are the dangers of the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, especially nuclear weapons. The world is still faced with various forms of terrorism. There is a grave danger resulting from the illicit trade in narcotics. Widespread abuses of human rights continue as do the problems of racism, anti-Semitism, xenophobia, and national and religious intolerance. The solution to the problem of underdevelopment requires more concerted and coordinated efforts.

In order to be able to deal with the many problems facing the world, it is necessary to have a vital and efficient United Nations.

Following the end of the cold war there was a period of optimism, renewed hope and expectation that the United Nations would finally play the role which had been envisaged for it at the time of its founding, almost 50 years ago. However, we have recently experienced severe disappointment at the inability of the United Nations to fulfil all these expectations; this has resulted in the loss of credibility by the United Nations.

The causes for its loss of credibility are many and varied, and among the most important is the failure of many United Nations peace-keeping operations to achieve their assigned goals. This is not to say that there have not been successful United Nations peace-keeping missions; this is evident from the operations in Cambodia and southern Africa.

One way in which the peace-keeping or peacemaking missions of the United Nations could be improved is by the establishment of a United Nations military force of a more permanent nature or one that could be assembled quickly, consisting of contingents from specific countries or regional arrangements. Such a force should be constructed in such a way as to make sure that its national contingents acted to implement Security Council resolutions and not to promote the policies of their States. In this regard I wish to express the Republic of Croatia's interest in providing troops for United Nations peace-keeping operations.

However, in order to make the peace-keeping functions of the United Nations more effective it is necessary to reform the body which is primarily responsible for the maintenance of international peace and security — the Security Council. It is also important that the composition of the Security Council reflect the new political and economic realities which have emerged since its formation after the Second World War. Due regard must also be given to proper geographical balance as well as to the increase in the membership of the United Nations. Making the Security Council more representative and democratic will also enhance its credibility as it will then be a more legitimate body representing the will of the international community. This will no doubt serve to facilitate the implementation of its resolutions.

In this regard, the Republic of Croatia supports an increase in the number of both the permanent and non-permanent members of the Security Council to a point which will not negatively affect its effectiveness. I wish to reiterate Croatia's support for the admission of Germany and Japan as permanent members of the Security Council due to the actual, as well as potential, contribution of these two countries to the cause of international peace and security and to other aspects of the work of the United Nations. Additionally, serious consideration should be given to the possibility of one or more developing countries from Asia, Africa or Latin America being granted permanent-member status.

Despite the various setbacks which I have already referred to, the United Nations still has a critical role to play in resolving many of the world's problems, especially in regard to the environment and sustainable development.

In addition to economic well-being, equal attention should be paid to respect for the human rights of each and every individual. In this regard, Croatia reiterates its support for the work of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, Mr. José Ayalo Lasso, and commends the manner in which he has been performing his duty. As a further method of combating gross violations of human rights and international humanitarian law, Croatia supports the establishment of an international criminal court in the form of an apolitical legal organ of the international community.

By its geographical position, history, socio-cultural features, and political and economic orientation, the Republic of Croatia is a part of both Central Europe and the Mediterranean. As a European country in transition, Croatia has already achieved significant progress in the development of democratic institutions and adherence to internationally accepted standards concerning the rule of law and protection of human rights. It is also worth noting that the economic situation has been stabilized and even improved during the past two years, despite the extremely difficult conditions caused by Serbian aggression. Our national development strategy is outward-oriented, while the social policies and legal framework are based on the principles of pluralistic democracy, including an open-market economy.

As a country of European civilization and tradition, Croatia's strategic, political, economic and social orientation is clearly focused on active participation in the process of European integration. Croatia's harmonization with European legislation and criteria represents a crucial part of its national development. While Croatia is already a member of various European intergovernmental and interregional organizations, the forging of closer relations with the European Union, as well as full membership in the Council of Europe, are the basic pillars of Croatia's European policy. However, Croatia will seek to adopt an approach to reflecting a balance between its European orientation and its wider global cooperation on a multilateral and bilateral basis.

The Republic of Croatia endeavours to contribute to lasting peace and durable stability in south-eastern Europe, which can be achieved only by the normalization of relations among all States based on full and strict respect for and adherence to the principles of the inviolability of international borders, the territorial integrity of all States and the rights of minorities.

Croatia has effectively assumed its role as an indispensable factor in the search for peace, stability and security. In this sense, Croatia will continue to cooperate constructively with the relevant international forums and leading institutions or countries with a view to finding a political solution to the present crisis in the region.

In this respect — and bearing in mind the nature of the crisis and that its underlying cause has been and remains Serbian aggression — Croatia will continue to cooperate closely and coordinate its political, military and diplomatic activities with the Republic and Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, on the basis of the Washington Agreements and other bilateral agreements and arrangements such as the Split Declaration. This is because one of the prerequisites for ensuring long-term stability and progress for Croatia is the settlement of the crisis in neighbouring Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Thanks to the clarity and transparency of its national agenda, the decisiveness of its political leadership and its cooperation with the international community in pursuit of its vital national interests, Croatia has succeeded over the course of several years in reintegrating most of its occupied territories, paving the way for the return of some 110,000 displaced persons and refugees to their homes, as well as in revitalizing energy and transport communications throughout the country.

Croatia has also managed in very difficult circumstances to reach reasonable stability and to enjoy increased prospects for further development and the strengthening of the democratic system and institutions, combined with a significant level of economic stabilization.

Since the outbreak of the crisis in south-eastern Europe Croatia has constantly advocated a negotiated peaceful solution, with the active support and full participation of the international community, and on the basis of the principles of the United Nations Charter and international law.

Special emphasis has been placed on the imperative of fully regulating and normalizing Croat-Serb relations. Future relations between these two States are of paramount importance for lasting stability in south-eastern Europe. At the same time, Croatia is actively contributing to the quest for a solution to the issue of the

Bosniac-Muslim people, one that would ensure their national rights and provide stability for the region. Furthermore, in the interests of ensuring long-term security and stability, Croatia has advocated the need for the introduction of the confidence- and security- building measures of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE).

Croatia has always done its utmost to enable the international community to pursue its peace efforts and has consistently demonstrated utmost restraint in resorting to the use of force. When we had to use force, our military always strove to minimize the loss of life and the extent of destruction and to enable the international community to pursue its peace efforts. Croatian military operations have always been in self-defence and in response to the intransigence and non-cooperation of the rebel Croatian-Serb leadership, to the inability of the United Nations peace-keeping forces to fulfil their mandate, to complete deadlock in international mediating efforts, or to direct provocations and terrorist attacks against civilians from the rebel Serb side.

In the aftermath of the liberation of almost one fifth of our country in August, isolated instances of unlawful behaviour and human rights abuses have been recorded. My Government strongly condemns all such individual acts and has initiated proceedings against the perpetrators.

Croatia believes that its military operations during the first week of August, on both sides of the Croatian-Bosnian border, have substantially changed the balance of power and in so doing have created a window of opportunity for revitalization of the ongoing peace process. Croatia is of the opinion that the joint effects of Operation Storm, the coordinated activities of the army of Bosnia and Herzegovina and HVO (Croatian Defence Council) units, and the actions of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) rapid reaction force against the Bosnian Serbs, coupled with diplomatic efforts, have finally opened the way to serious and comprehensive peace negotiations, which will eventually lead to a realistic, balanced and lasting solution to the crisis.

Croatia fully supports the current United States peace initiative and the increased decisiveness of the international community, manifested particularly by the United Nations and NATO rapid-reaction force operations and pressure against the Bosnian Serbs.

Croatia's major interest with regard to Bosnia and Herzegovina is in achieving a lasting peace and just settlement of the conflict that would be satisfactory to the constituent peoples and that would ensure stability along Croatian borders; the survival, safety and dignified life of the Bosnian Croats; and mutually beneficial relations and cooperation between the two friendly neighbouring countries.

Therefore, Croatia strongly supports the implementation of the Washington Agreements and the Split Declaration and the strengthening of the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina and its association with Croatia at various levels and in various areas of cooperation.

The prerequisites for lasting stability, security and cooperation in the region include a just and lasting solution to the crisis, reconstruction and development of the countries in the region, normalization of relations between all successor States of the former Yugoslavia on the basis of equal succession and introduction of a new regional order as an integral part of the new European security system.

It is Croatia's firm position that the solution for the peaceful reintegration of the remaining occupied territories of Eastern Slavonia, Baranja and Western Srijem and the former United Nations Confidence Restoration Operation in Croatia (UNCRO) Sector East must be an integral part of the overall peaceful resolution of the crisis in the region, in both Bosnia and Herzegovina and Croatia, within the time-frame of the current peace initiative and the expiration date of the UNCRO mandate. Without progress in the solution of this issue, progress in the settlement of the crisis in Bosnia and Herzegovina cannot be envisaged, and neither can any real stabilization of the situation in south-eastern Europe.

Deeply committed to peaceful reintegration, Croatia is willing to immediately open meaningful and constructive talks with the representatives of the Serb population in Eastern Slavonia, Baranja and Western Srijem that should lead to the re-establishment of Croatia's full sovereignty, the return of forcibly displaced persons to their homes and respect, in accordance with high European standards, for the minority rights of the Serbs and other minority ethnic or national communities — Slovak, Hungarian, Ukrainian and others — in this area.

To this end Croatia has already proposed to the local Serbs and the Government of the Federal Republic of

Yugoslavia, through the good offices of the international mediators, a comprehensive, elaborate and concrete peace plan in the form of a draft agreement on the peaceful reintegration of Eastern Slavonia, Baranja and Western Srijem into the constitutional and economic system of the Republic of Croatia.

Implementation of the proposed agreement must begin with the immediate withdrawal of all military and paramilitary groups not originally from this region, to be followed by the disarming and disbanding, under UNCRO supervision, of the military and paramilitary groups composed of persons who reside in the area.

Upon signing the agreement on the peaceful reintegration of the remaining occupied areas, the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia and the Republic of Croatia would recognize each other within their internationally recognized borders and diplomatic relations between these two States would be established at the ambassadorial level. This would be followed shortly by the reopening of the Zagreb-Belgrade highway and railways, the river traffic along the Danube and Sava rivers, the Adriatic pipeline's outlet to Serbia and telecommunications between Croatia and the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia.

The proposed draft agreement provides ample evidence of Croatia's sincere will and disposition to find a negotiated and just solution to the reintegration of the remaining occupied territories, providing for the legitimate rights of Croatia as a sovereign State and of all its citizens, including its minorities. Along these lines, Croatia participated in the Contact Group negotiations in Geneva and New York. Following these negotiations, I am moderately optimistic that the resolution of the crisis and peace in the region can be achieved in the near future.

However, there is no doubt that progress towards a lasting, just and comprehensive peace is contingent on the continued, determined and coordinated efforts of the international community in the maintenance of a global approach to the current peace initiative and the continuation of the international sanctions against the Belgrade regime. In the next several weeks the parties and the international community have to work out a framework, in the form of a package, for the peace accord, which should include several interrelated steps: a solution for Bosnia and Herzegovina; a resolution of the issue of Eastern Slavonia leading to its reintegration into Croatia; mutual recognition, within their international borders, between Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia and the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia; and changes in the sanctions regime against the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia as the international community deems appropriate. Upon the acceptance of such a plan, the road to lasting peace and stability will be opened.

On behalf of my Government, I would like to thank again all the countries contributing troops to the UNCRO operations in Croatia and underscore our appreciation of their efforts to aid the peace process. Croatia deeply regrets the loss of life and the injuries sustained by members of the United Nations force during their mission in Croatia. Their noble sacrifice will always be remembered and cherished by the Croatian people.

In the name of my Government, I am particularly proud to thank the General Assembly for having supported the cause of Croatia, most of all by adopting resolution 49/43, concerning the occupied territories of Croatia. I kindly ask the Assembly to remain steadfast in the contribution it has made through this important resolution and through the individual and collective engagement of most Members' Governments to the search for a just and lasting peace for Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina, as well as for the whole of south-eastern Europe.

The Acting President: The next speaker is the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Greece, His Excellency Mr. Karolos Papoulias, on whom I now call.

Mr. Papoulias (Greece) *(spoke in Greek; English text furnished by the delegation):* Allow me at the outset to extend to the President of the General Assembly the warmest congratulations of the Greek Government on his election to the presidency at this historic fiftieth session, which is a well-deserved tribute to his personal qualities and his distinguished international career. I would also like to thank His Excellency Mr. Amara Essy for the highly constructive and efficient manner in which he performed his duties as President of the General Assembly during its forty-ninth session.

I wish to take this opportunity to address my sincere congratulations to the Secretary-General of the United Nations, Mr. Boutros Boutros-Ghali, who is striving with courage, energy, political will and vision for a new world in which law and ethics will prevail, and for the restructuring of the Organization, so that it may meet the challenges of our time. He has our full support in his efforts to fulfil his mission.

Let me also welcome Palau, the new Member that has been admitted to the United Nations this year. Its presence among us is a renewed expression of our Organization's desire to welcome in its midst all those States that undertake the commitment to adhere to the purposes and principles set out in the United Nations Charter.

The Foreign Minister of Spain, in his capacity as President of the Council of the European Union, delivered a statement earlier this week on behalf of the Union and its member States. My Government fully subscribes to the content of that statement and of the memorandum of the Union. I would like, however, to elaborate further on some issues which are of particular interest to my country.

This fiftieth session of the General Assembly provides us with an opportunity, not only for an annual exchange of views between the States Members of the United Nations on the state of international affairs, but also for the celebration of a milestone in the life of the Organization. This celebration should not, however, be just a token tribute to the great undertaking of 50 years ago. It is only natural that, on this occasion, Governments should endeavour to analyse the successes and failures of the United Nations over five decades, to ask themselves whether we have come closer to fulfilling, in the practice of international relations, the principles proclaimed in the Charter, and to look to the years ahead in order to try to chart our new priorities in a rapidly changing world.

This Organization was brought into being by the vision, the hope and the determination of men and women who experienced at first hand the lethal dangers of nationalism, economic depression, lost freedom and devastating war — men and women who realized the need to create mechanisms that would allow States to embark upon a collective effort in dealing with a wide range of complex international issues.

Looking back over the 50 years since the guns of the Second World War fell silent, one notes with satisfaction the valuable work performed by the United Nations as a forum for debate on matters of international concern, and as a centre for harmonizing the activities of States in the economic, social, cultural and humanitarian fields.

The United Nations has played a vital role as a framework for the historical process of decolonization, by securing international recognition for the new countries and by helping them improve their economic and social conditions. It has defined human rights for the global community. It has defeated the shameful practice of apartheid. It has provided the basis for an intensive development of international law. It has monitored elections in countries where elections have seldom been held. It has assisted in the drafting of constitutions, and has trained indigenous police forces. It has moved forward consensus on global problems such as disarmament, the environment, the status of women, human rights, development and many other fundamental issues.

Furthermore, the specialized agencies of the United Nations system have achieved major successes in their different spheres of activity, and have provided invaluable humanitarian and other assistance in distressed areas of the world.

Despite this creditable record, it is the shortcomings of the United Nations that receive the greatest attention. I will certainly not argue that the achievements of those past 50 years yield any ground whatsoever for complacency. However, while disappointment has been frequently expressed at the Organization's performance, no credible alternative is offered by those who criticize it. Moreover, little regard is given to the innumerable constraints under which it operates, as well as to the fact that it can be only as effective as Governments allow it to be. The United Nations has indeed structural deficiencies, which it urgently needs to overcome. But it is too often a useful scapegoat for the mistakes, the failings and the unfulfilled promises of Member States.

The Secretary-General, in his highly acclaimed and very timely report entitled "Supplement to an 'Agenda for Peace'", issued earlier this year, has underlined the great problems presented to the United Nations by the new generation of post-cold-war conflicts, for which the Organization was obviously unprepared. He has pointed out that, for instance, in the framework of its peace-keeping activities, the Organization has had, in some cases, to juggle efforts to combine mandates, including the use of force under Chapter VII of the Charter, with the basic principle of neutrality and impartiality of the United Nations and the lack of adequate resources to effectively implement that mandate. In the same context, shortcomings in the unity of command which we have witnessed in the case of some peace-keeping operations have also contributed to undermining the effectiveness of United Nations action.

The financial crisis in general has also been particularly debilitating as regards the activities of the Organization in all areas. The Secretary-General has

often questioned the credibility of those Member States that support the ends, by actively participating in the decision-making process, but not the means, by failing to pay their assessed contribution. Nobody denies the fact that considerable progress can still be achieved with regard to the effective use of resources that are already available. But unless the necessary financial means are provided, it would be folly to expect miracles from the Organization. Eliminating waste and inefficiency, through better management and accountability, essential though it may be, will never be a substitute for ensuring adequate and regular funding.

The increasing resort to, and use, of sanctions regimes has brought to light another series of difficulties which have also undermined the credibility of the United Nations. As the Secretary-General pointed out in his report, the objectives for which specific sanctions regimes were imposed and the criteria for their lifting have not been clearly defined, or have seemed to change over time, as has been the case for the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (Serbia and Montenegro) and Iraq. This situation is all the more worrying because experience has proved that the imposition of sanctions results in the infliction of tremendous suffering upon vulnerable groups of the targeted country, rather than in the modification of the behaviour of its Government.

Furthermore, the role of those countries that shoulder the main burden of the implementation of the sanctions regimes, despite the considerable collateral damage which they suffer in terms of economic and social costs, needs, at last, to be appropriately acknowledged, for their contribution to the maintenance of international peace and security is, in some cases, no less important than that of troop-contributing countries. It should be clear that if, in the long run, the difficulties of those Member States that have the misfortune to be neighbours of the targeted countries are not dealt with in a satisfactory way, *inter alia*, through the appropriate implementation of Article 50 of the Charter, then general support for the use of sanctions as an effective instrument will not be easily maintained.

Regrettably, one would have to acknowledge that the primary purpose of the United Nations — that of establishing a pattern of world order and international security — has been achieved to a much lesser degree than had been expected, or is indeed required by the growing needs of the international community. The threat and the use of force are still a recurrent feature of international relations, contrary to the expectations raised in 1945. The territorial integrity or the sovereign rights of States are frequently threatened or compromised by the practice of power politics, in contravention of the purposes and principles that govern our Organization.

In this context, allow me to observe that a charter is of value in so far as each member that subscribes to it conducts itself in accordance with the commitments it has undertaken of its own free will, without guile or reservations. It is also of paramount importance that the United Nations should not be perceived as resorting to double standards when it comes to military aggression and other blatant violations of international law.

The guiding principle of Greek foreign policy is the establishment of good-neighbourly relations with all countries of the region, on the basis of respect for international law, national sovereignty and human rights, and on non-interference in the internal affairs of other States. This principle has always constituted the cornerstone of our foreign policy and applies fully to our relations with neighbouring Turkey. It is the sincere wish of my Government that Greek-Turkish relations be normalized, on the basis of the principles of international law and the relevant international treaties, and in conformity with the Charter of the United Nations, the Helsinki Document and the Charter of Paris for a New Europe. Greece has never raised any claims against Turkey. On the other hand, we have made it absolutely clear that we categorically reject any idea of compromising our sovereign rights, which we are determined to protect by all legitimate means.

Unfortunately, Turkey is following a different approach in its policies *vis-à-vis* our country. To cite just one example, I wish to refer to the resolution adopted on 8 June 1995 by the Turkish National Assembly, authorizing the Turkish Government to use military force in case Greece exercised its legal right to expand its territorial waters to 12 nautical miles, according to the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea. The said resolution was obviously endorsed by the Turkish Government, since it was forwarded to the Secretary-General on 23 June 1995 in a letter addressed to him by the Permanent Representative of Turkey to the United Nations.

Turkey is in fact attempting to intimidate Greece into forfeiting a right acknowledged to all signatory parties, by article 3 of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea of 1982, and already exercised by a large number of States. Furthermore, it is beyond any

doubt that the above-mentioned resolution constitutes a direct violation of Article 2, paragraph 4, of the Charter of the United Nations, which stipulates that

> "All Members shall refrain in their international relations from the threat or use of force against the territorial integrity or political independence of any State",

as well as of many similar provisions of international treaties and conventions.

It is self-evident that an essential improvement of Greek-Turkish relations presupposes a just and lasting solution of the Cyprus question and the re-establishment of international legality in Cyprus. Unfortunately, during the last 21 years, the Turkish forces, defying a series of United Nations resolutions, have occupied a large part of Cyprus, despite the assiduous efforts of the Secretary-General. Their continuing presence has resulted in the division of the island by force, the brutal violation of human rights and freedoms, and the systematic plundering of the island's cultural and religious heritage.

The Greek Government strongly supports the efforts of the Secretary-General with a view to a just and viable solution of the Cyprus problem, on the basis of the relevant Security Council resolutions, including the most recent one, resolution 939 (1994), which calls for a bi-communal and bi-zonal federal State of Cyprus with single sovereignty and international personality and single citizenship, with its independence and territorial integrity safeguarded. The Greek Government believes that the prospect of the accession of Cyprus to the European Union, which was further promoted by concrete actions taken by the Union in the course of 1995, will create conditions that would make it possible to tackle the current deadlock and, thus, assist effectively the Secretary-General's efforts for the reversal of the unacceptable status quo.

One should also bear in mind that no progress towards a settlement is possible as long as the Turkish occupation forces remain on the island. The Greek Government considers the proposal for the total demilitarization of the island, put forward by President Clerides, as most constructive. It also feels that it is imperative that countries which are in a position to back the efforts of the Secretary-General and wish to do so should exert the necessary pressure so that the side which is responsible for the impasse will be forced to abide by international law and United Nations resolutions.

The signing of the Interim Accord, on 13 September 1995, in New York, constitutes an important step towards establishing a new era in relations between Greece and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia. It also paves the way for bilateral cooperation for their own benefit, as well as for the sake of peace, cooperation, stability and prosperity throughout the Balkans, which has been so affected by the crisis in the former Yugoslavia.

We do hope that this preliminary significant step in the relations between the two countries will lead to a definite settlement of the dispute over the name, which constitutes the main difference existing between them and which will be dealt with in the context of further negotiations, in accordance with the conventional commitment of the parties concerned and the relevant Security Council resolutions.

Greece attaches great importance to its relations with Albania. For this reason, we constantly follow a policy of good- neighbourliness and cooperation with that country and continue to support, in many ways, its efforts to promote political and economic reforms and thus contribute to the establishment of a modern and democratic society.

Greece has been offering substantial economic support to Albania, which has enabled it to face the many difficult problems that arose after the former regime was overthrown. Today, Greek investments in Albania continue to contribute substantially to the country's economic development and to the strengthening of its social stability.

Furthermore, a large Greek minority lives in Albania, contributing positively to the country's development. Under the previous regime, this minority was subjected to persecution and harsh treatment. Greece is convinced that the Greek minority in Albania constitutes a bridge of friendship between the two countries and helps further their rapprochement and cooperation. For this reason, we believe that the human rights of the members of that minority should be fully respected, so that they are able to stay in their homeland and live there in a safe environment. Moreover, they should be proportionally represented in the administration, the State institutions and the armed forces, and be allowed to exercise their religious and educational rights freely and fully.

Unfortunately, notwithstanding some improvements, considerable restrictions continue to apply to the free

exercise of these rights, particularly in the field of education. We sincerely hope that the Albanian Government, in conformity also with its international commitments, will secure full respect for the human rights of the Greek minority.

During the current year, the tragedy of the former Yugoslavia has continued to unfold relentlessly, imposing tremendous suffering and hardships on the civilian population. Greece, as a country neighbouring the former Yugoslavia, has been directly subjected to the negative consequences of this bloody conflict, as regards both its economy and its security.

My country has always advocated that, as has already been pointed out by the presidency of the European Union, a fair and viable solution to the conflict in Bosnia can be found only by political means, and not on the battlefields. This is why from the beginning of the crisis we have spared no effort to ensure that all the parties involved moved in the direction of trying to promote a peaceful settlement, in cooperation with our European partners and Russia, which has played, and is to play, a significant role in this issue. Furthermore, the Greek Government fully supports the current diplomatic initiative and the ongoing negotiating process based on the Contact Group plan.

Recently, there have been encouraging developments regarding the future shape of things in the former Yugoslavia. The parties have begun to show signs of rapprochement and willingness to talk. Thus, we warmly welcome the Basic Principles, agreed in Geneva on 8 September 1995, and the Further Basic Principles, agreed three days ago in New York, which are very important steps on the long and difficult road to peace. Much remains to be done, but if the parties display the necessary political will and with the assistance of the international community a comprehensive and viable peaceful settlement should no longer be a fictitious objective, whose attainment would take a very long time.

Greece, for its part, is ready to contribute to the fulfilment of this objective through the good relations that it has developed with all the parties involved in the conflict. Furthermore, my country, fully aware of the intricacies of the Balkans and having actively participated in the initiatives for regional economic cooperation, will do its utmost, both on a national basis and in the framework of the European Union, to promote efforts aiming at the reconstruction of the former Yugoslavia.

Concerning the situation in the Middle East, Greece considers as a matter of utmost importance the early and unimpeded implementation of the recent Erez and Taba Agreements and the speedy conclusion of the talks on redeployment and elections, together with the solution of the two outstanding problems, namely security for all, and social and economic development.

We welcome the signature yesterday in Washington by Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) of the interim agreement on the second stage of Palestinian autonomy, which constitutes additional proof of determination and political courage. We congratulate the Israeli Government and Chairman Arafat on their commitment to peace.

Greece believes that the international community must exert consistent efforts, in which we are willing to actively participate, aiming at the creation of a solid basis for the political and economic survival of the Palestinian National Authority, thereby providing a source of hope for the Palestinian people.

Greece is of the view that the peace process could be substantially promoted if the States of the region directly involved in it joined forces with those actively participating, and we welcome all recent indications to this effect. The peoples of the region should be guaranteed a secure life, within internationally recognized and safe boundaries.

We urge the implementation of Security Council resolution 425 (1978) on Lebanon.

Greece, which has actively participated in the Middle East peace process since it began in Madrid, will continue to offer full support and assistance to the bilateral and multilateral negotiations towards a comprehensive, final and just peace.

Greece believes that an increase in the number of members of the Security Council has become an imperative necessity. Such an increase, which should be moderate so as not to undermine the effectiveness of the Council's action, must reflect the current number of States that are Members of the United Nations, the realities of the new international situation and an equitable distribution among all existing regional groups. While recognizing that any formal definition of criteria for new permanent members could not be easily formulated, we consider that new members of this category should be selected from among States that exert

a major influence in world affairs and are in a position to make an essential contribution to the maintenance of international peace and security.

Greece welcomes the indefinite extension of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty and the commitment made by the States parties to its universalization and full implementation. We emphasize the importance of strengthening the review process and adopting a set of principles and objectives for non-proliferation and disarmament. We also stress the need to complete without delay comprehensive and verifiable treaties to ban nuclear-weapon tests and to cut off the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons and other nuclear explosive devices.

We are deeply concerned at the continued dangers posed by the excessive transfer of conventional arms, and we support putting the United Nations Register fully into effect. Furthermore, the continuing injuries to civilians caused by anti-personnel mines demonstrate the need to strengthen multilateral controls in this regard.

Growing economic and social gaps breed violence. The need to bridge the differences between rich and poor, both between nations and within nations, is of the utmost importance for our efforts and opportunities to preserve peace. This fundamental truth was recognized and stressed by the founders of the United Nations and, subsequently, by all members of the Organization, who pledged to "employ international machinery for the promotion of the economic and social advancement of all peoples".

In responding to the changing needs of the increasingly interdependent world economy, we have to reinforce the coherence and effectiveness of the competent international institutions and to complete without delay our consideration of the "Agenda for Development", thus setting out a new impetus to international cooperation in this field and defining the particular contribution expected of the United Nations system.

There is an increasing realization worldwide that in major denials of human rights, which breed antagonisms and deep resentments, there lie the seeds of international discord as surely as in the clashes of economic rivalries and territorial ambitions. In this regard, Greece strongly condemns all forms of discrimination and intolerance, and reaffirms its full support for the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights and his coordinating role throughout the United Nations system, as well as for the strengthening of the Centre for Human Rights. The principles of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, and also those of the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action, as well as of the other international acts and instruments, should guide the actions of all Member States in this respect on a daily basis.

Industrialization and the technological revolution, while bringing benefits to the human race, have also given rise to side effects, namely the problems of the devastation of the natural environment. In this context, the importance of meeting the commitments we made at the 1992 Rio Earth Summit, and the need to review and strengthen them, where appropriate, cannot be overstressed. Strengthening national institutions responsible for environmental management, and supporting international organizations that focus on environmental issues, will be vital in maintaining and increasing the momentum for the protection and the improvement of the environment.

Troops and civilian personnel engaged in United Nations peace-keeping and humanitarian activities have been carrying out their most important tasks under conditions of extraordinary personal risk, and very often at the expense of their own lives. I would like to condemn, in the strongest possible terms, the abhorrent and unacceptable harassment of and attacks against United Nations peace-keepers, to whose relentless courage and determination we pay tribute. I should also like to stress the need for measures which will ensure their security, including the early entry into force of the recently adopted Convention for the Safety of United Nations and Associated Personnel.

These past 50 years of United Nations existence have been a time of unparalleled human advancement and of the fundamental enlargement of human expectations. As I see it, it will be the principal task of the Organization, which has done so much to give voice to those expectations, to take the lead in bringing them ever closer to realization.

Greece, as a small country, has always had a strong vested interest in the strengthening of the common capacity to deal with threats to international peace and security and, in general, in the success of the United Nations. The Greek people will always be supportive of a collective approach to global and regional problems. For my part, I can only reaffirm our resolve to extend our full cooperation to the efforts of the Organization as it strives for the realization of its noble objectives, and our continued dedication to its purposes and principles.

The Acting President *(interpretation from Arabic):* I now call on the Minister for Foreign Affairs and Worship of Bolivia, His Excellency Mr. Antonio Aranibar Quiroga.

Mr. Aranibar Quiroga (Bolivia) *(interpretation from Spanish):* Allow me to convey to the President of the General Assembly the congratulations of the Government and people of Bolivia upon his election to the presidency of the fiftieth session of the General Assembly. He can be assured that my delegation will cooperate with him to ensure the full success of this important session.

The commemoration of the fiftieth anniversary of the entry into force of the United Nations Charter affords a fresh opportunity for critical and renewed reflection on the scope, difficulties and role of the multilateral system.

During the year 1995 important meetings of universal scope have taken place, such as the World Summit on Social Development, the Fourth World Conference on Women, and the Review and Extension Conference on the Treaty on Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons. Those meetings, together with others of a bilateral, subregional or regional character — notably the Hemispheric Summit in Miami — show that the principles which presided over the creation of the United Nations are still very much alive, and demonstrate the need to make significant further headway in promoting peace, human rights, democracy, and economic and social development.

Mr. Ould Ely (Mauritania), Vice-President, took the Chair.

Meetings at the highest level of the world's political leaders and their representatives, ready to assume undertakings on issues of such significance, are indicative of a strong political will and reveal an interest in finding concrete collective responses to the problems of our time.

As a result of those Conferences, the world community has at hand new approaches that enrich and strengthen prior agreements as it seeks to cope successfully with contemporary challenges. For example, social development and recognition of the due role of women in society have ceased to be mere promises; they are becoming definite realities before the end of this century.

The International Decade of the World's Indigenous People will make it possible for priority attention to be given to that important sector of the community.

The end of the cold war has not released the material and human resources that were committed to that contest. Nor has it freed our minds of concern over war and destruction. There persist negative situations and prejudices, which were born during that period when the world was divided into antagonistic blocs, and which no longer have any justification.

The long-awaited peace dividend has not been forthcoming; on the contrary, we see a proliferation of conflicts in many parts of the world. Many of these situations are due to still unresolved social and national problems, to a backlog of injustices and long-standing resentments, to geopolitical and economic interests which, from within and from outside, have exacerbated confrontation for decades, and, above all, to Governments' difficulties in defining an effective form of cooperation for the peaceful solution of problems.

In this context, we reiterate our support for the principles and the renewed objectives of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries, whose chairmanship is shortly to be assumed by the sister republic of Colombia.

We feel a sense of solidarity with the peoples of the former Yugoslavia, who are enduring the torment of an unjustifiable war. We also express our solidarity with the millions of human beings affected by military conflict, unilateral blockades, hindrances to free contact with the outside world, and by having been uprooted from their lands.

We reiterate what the Heads of State or Government of the Rio Group stated at their recent summit meeting in Quito:

> "We express our concern over attempts to enforce domestic laws beyond territorial boundaries in violation of international law and the fundamental principles governing coexistence in the region. Such actions violate the sovereignty of other States and are contrary to unanimously adopted transparent trade practices". (*A/50/425, annex, para. 13*)

Bolivia expresses its condemnation of grave violations of international law, war crimes, violations of the fundamental rules of coexistence, manifestations of racism, and other offenses against humanity, all of which should be vigorously condemned. The work of the United Nations in this field has been important, but it needs to be further refined. In that work, the role of regional and subregional organizations for cooperation and

coordination is essential and should gain greater importance in years to come. These organizations include the Organization of American States, the Rio Group and the various regional and subregional instruments of economic integration, to which my Government lends its full support.

We rejoice that Haiti and other countries have made firm strides towards peace and democratic governance.

Likewise, Bolivia notes with particular interest, and commends, the peace process in the Middle East, whose advances in the face of difficulties give us cause to be optimistic and to hope for reconciliation through the fashioning of innovative solutions with a distinctive explicit political content. The agreement signed yesterday between Israel and Palestine is an example of determination and vision of historic proportions.

Bolivia has expressed its rejection of the resumption of nuclear tests, which jeopardize negotiations towards the speedy adoption of a comprehensive nuclear-test-ban treaty.

We condemn terrorism and organized crime, whose scope and reach cut across national boundaries and which thus threatens security and constitutional stability everywhere. Bolivia has signed several bilateral treaties intended to advance international cooperation on legal matters within a framework of strict respect for sovereignty, but at the same time closing off avenues to impunity for international crime.

As our awareness of the rights and duties of multilateral interdependence grows, cooperation in achieving the inherent right to development of all the world's peoples should come to the fore.

In the new international situation, Bolivia supports initiatives aimed at strengthening the United Nations and shares the conviction that it is necessary to carry out major reforms in its structure and functioning. Bolivia believes it essential as a first step in that direction to strengthen the General Assembly as the principal organ providing for effective participation by all countries.

My Government supports initiatives aimed at expanding the Security Council, in both its permanent and its non-permanent membership. Such an expansion should reflect the diversity of the world's regions and enable all States to participate effectively and responsibly in the commitment to guarantee peace, security and the timely settlement of conflicts, in a transparent manner and in keeping with the interests of the international community, not only in the narrow framework of the individual interests of States.

I also highlight the importance we attach to the United Nations in the area of international cooperation, especially in the economic sphere and on matters of social and technological development, and the urgency of restoring to the Economic and Social Council the high stature it originally possessed.

The principles of justice and international law must be our main guiding light in seeking solutions to the problems we face.

With regard to Bolivia's maritime question, which we have brought before international forums, I wish to declare to this Assembly the political will of my Government to embark upon negotiations that are consonant with our historic responsibility, that serve the rights and interests of all parties involved, and that ensure a sovereign Bolivian presence on the Pacific Ocean. Bolivia has to contend with the consequences of the land-locked position imposed upon it, the economic, political and moral effects of which demand a solution in the framework of international solidarity, justice, equity and law.

Just as countries call for international justice, we are obliged also to apply that principle within our own societies. That is the golden rule of the Administration of President Gonzalo Sánchez de Losada. Our message is one of change. Never before in the history of our republic have such profound and rapid structural changes been democratically and peacefully carried out as those that began in Bolivia in August 1993.

First, we are implementing the law on the people's participation, which is integrating civil society into the political system. Traditionally disadvantaged populations now have in their hands the ability to diagnose their problems and to prescribe public policy, especially regarding self-help to meet their own needs. This is essentially a policy of redistribution, which enables a large part of the nation fully to assume their status as citizens.

Secondly, the foregoing requires training the people so that they will be able to meet internal and external challenges. To that end, another reform undertaken by President Gonzálo Sánchez de Lozada's administration is educational reform, viewed specifically in the light of

Bolivia's ethnic and cultural diversity and with the aim of institutionalizing bilingual and multicultural education.

Thirdly, I am pleased to inform this Assembly that capital investment in Bolivia's main public enterprises is moving forward successfully and strongly. We are transforming the largest productive and service units of the country to enable them to double their capital in the space of a few months, modernize their management in accordance with the requirements of international life, and secure a series of real benefits for the Bolivian population, making possible individual investment by citizens of 50 per cent of the share capital.

Such initiatives represent an effort to make Bolivia equal to contemporary demands, especially those resulting from the international economy, which is characterized by great dynamism, innovation and competitiveness.

International economic cooperation is indispensable and should enjoy the firm political backing of developed countries and international financial institutions. For that reason my country expresses concern about the declining and negative trends of some sources of cooperation and financing. This situation is especially disturbing when seen in the light of the fact that Bolivia has to contend in its territory with a universal problem — namely, illicit drug trafficking.

It is paradoxical — to say the least — to urge an increase in Bolivia's contribution and in Bolivia's tasks in that common struggle precisely at a time when cooperation resources are decreasing. The task at hand is simultaneously to fulfil the commitments in the struggle against drug trafficking and to prepare to embark on genuine sustainable development, especially in the rural sector, where the most acute poverty exists.

Given the magnitude of the tasks falling to Bolivia in this matter, strong backing from the international community is needed for Bolivia's national strategy in regard to interdiction, prevention, the eradication of surplus crops, and alternative development. That contribution is essential to Bolivia's effort to cease being a link in the drug-trafficking chain and, at the same time, ensure political and economic stability and promote development of the country's productive apparatus.

With a view to consolidating the vision of shared responsibility with regard to the problem of drug-trafficking, the nations of the Americas support the holding of a world conference to take stock of the situation and the state of international cooperation in the struggle against demand for and production, sale, trafficking and illicit distribution of narcotics. In that context, Bolivia actively advocates the holding in 1977 of a second international conference against drug abuse and illicit drug trafficking, under the aegis of the United Nations.

Before concluding, I must refer to the topic of sustainable development.

We must stimulate vigorous and sustained economic growth, with social equity, in conditions that protect and make efficient use of natural resources and ensure rational distribution of the fruits of that growth. Henceforth, we must adopt a mode of development that is nurtured by technological advances designed to curb the waste and pollution that have characterized industrialized societies.

Accordingly, it is with special satisfaction that I announce to this Assembly that in the latter half of next year Bolivia will have the privilege of hosting, in the city of Santa Cruz de la Sierra, the American Hemispheric Summit on Sustainable Development. We hope that the ideas and proposals that emerge from that important meeting will contribute to the development of our countries and to better preservation of the environment in this part of the world.

The Acting President (*interpretation from French*): I call on the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance of Samoa, His Excellency Mr. Tuilaepa Sailele Malielegaoi.

Mr. Malielegaoi (Samoa): I have to confess to my usual excitement and pleasure at addressing the General Assembly, exceptionally crowded and patient even at this late hour.

Let me begin by congratulating Mr. Diogo Freitas do Amaral on his election as President of the General Assembly at its fiftieth session. Mr. Freito do Amaral represents a country with a long history of global achievements. With his personal qualities and experience, he is a very natural choice to guide the work of this Assembly at such a critical moment.

Let me also pay tribute to his predecessor, Mr. Amara Essy, for his dedicated and distinguished stewardship during the last session of the General Assembly.

I want also to record the gratitude of my Government to the Secretary-General, Mr. Boutros Boutros-Ghali, for the measure and quality of the leadership that he continues to provide in the direction and work of the Organization.

Barely three weeks ago Hurricane Luis wrought devastation on several island countries in the Caribbean, causing major setbacks to economic and sustainable development, as well as the loss of lives. As we ourselves recently experienced two similar disasters, our thoughts and sympathy are with the people of the Caribbean nations devastated by Hurricane Luis, and we pray for their speedy recovery.

The President of the General Assembly, in his opening remarks, reminded us of the scope of the membership and the universal character of this Organization. Samoa is proud to note that a sister nation of the Pacific, the Republic of Palau, is the newest Member of the United Nations, and I am delighted to extend to Palau the warmest of welcomes. Two weeks ago the Republic of Palau was acclaimed to membership — becoming the sixteenth member — of the South Pacific Forum. That too was a moment of great pride for all of us.

We come together at a special moment for this Organization and in the history of international cooperation. Undeniably, this is a session of exceptional importance. We need to take stock of where we, the United Nations, are and to set new goals and priorities for the future.

Samoa believes that any stocktaking must be rooted in the Charter, which proclaims the purposes and principles of the Organization. Regrettably, the Charter pledges that we have made to succeeding generations remain largely unfulfilled.

It is right, and it is natural, therefore that at this fiftieth session, we, the peoples of the United Nations, should seek to renew our commitment to those pledges. But first, it must be remembered that they are pledges that carry the attendant duty — a most sacred duty — to make them realities. It is a duty imposed upon us all and accepted upon membership in our Organization. Far too often, this is forgotten, or seemingly ignored.

This session will also be the natural occasion on which to reaffirm our support for, and our faith in, the United Nations. I speak positively and unhesitatingly about reaffirmation because, quite frankly, what else is there to take the place of the United Nations?

What we have is certainly not perfect. And given its almost universal make-up, the range of issues before it and the increasing demands being made of the United Nations, it would be surprising if this were the case. Indeed, in recent years, all of us in this Assembly have been engaged in various activities aimed at making the United Nations more relevant, more efficient and more cost-effective and at preparing the Organization for the twenty-first century. We welcome in particular resolution 49/252, which was recently adopted, on strengthening of the United Nations system, and we look forward to taking part in the discussions in the Open-ended High-level Working Group established. If and when we have devised changes and improvements in the United Nations system, I dare say that in years to come it will be necessary to persist in monitoring and putting into place further needed reforms to ensure the sustaining vigour of the Organization. That being the case, there is clearly room for criticism and fault-finding, from among ourselves as well as from those who look on. We do not however think the shortcomings of the United Nations warrant uninformed cynicism and unfair blame, nor the charge of irrelevance that is sometimes levelled at it.

But clearly, the standing and the very role of the United Nations is at risk if the Members continue to deny the Organization the funds and resources it needs. The Secretary-General has spoken of this matter time and again, and once more in his report on the work of the Organization (A/50/1). The Organization is in a most critical financial state, but it is also clear that the situation can be substantially improved with the early payment of arrears and by the full and timely payment of assessed contributions. We can only urge the most immediate action on the part of those who know they must act.

Samoa is a small and least-developed country. We are deeply committed to the United Nations, and we will continue to meet our financial and other responsibilities, notwithstanding the budgetary problems we face. We share the view that the strongest measures must be taken to achieve sound financial viability for this Organization. It would be essential for this purpose that there be a fair, more equitable and realistic scale of assessments, one which would take full account of the principle of capacity to pay.

This must also take into account the predicament of some countries, including my own, which are assessed at the floor rate of the scale, at levels far beyond their capacity to pay. We believe there is a just case for abolishing or reducing the current floor rate. This is a

matter of importance to many small States and we would hope that the High-level Working Group on the Financial Situation of the United Nations would continue to give it due consideration.

There is a second aspect, which touches on the emphasis now being given to United Nations peace-keeping activities. While Samoa recognizes the necessary and traditional role of the United Nations in promoting global peace and security, it seems to us that ultimately no amount of force and no measure of peace-keeping can sustain peace and security without attention to the root causes. Our own view is that human misery brought about by poverty and the denial of human and democratic rights are often the real and fundamental problems. Unless these are removed or minimized, there can never be the substratum that we need for lasting world peace and security.

Put simply, Samoa believes firmly that social and economic development must remain a major preoccupation of the United Nations, as pledged in the Charter. Development priorities spelt out in recent global conferences for the sustained economic and social advancement of the developing countries should be effectively implemented. They should not be ignored while the Organization's attention and its focus, in terms of human and financial resources, is diverted elsewhere, largely on peace-keeping activities.

For Samoa and other small island States disadvantaged by their size and geographical location, the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development on Small Island Developing States must remain a centrepiece of our attention.

We welcome steps taken by the various organs of the United Nations system to implement the Plan of Action. We appreciate, in particular, what is being done by the Department for Policy Co-ordination and Sustainable Development and the Unit set up to monitor the implementation of the Programme of Action. These steps will complement efforts undertaken by our regional countries in the South Pacific region to further advance the commitments made in Rio, Barbados and elsewhere.

Samoa's commitment to the pursuit of global peace and security is unwavering. We will continue to do what we can. Conflicts which continue to rage in many regions of the world today cannot be ignored. They affect us all, for they impact directly or indirectly on the ability of the United Nations and the international community to respond to the development needs of others.

We welcome the latest initiatives with a view to bringing a peaceful end to the conflict in Bosnia. A settlement acceptable to all parties must be reached.

Another milestone in the Middle East peace process was reached in Washington yesterday. With the rest of the world, we celebrate and commend the enduring efforts and commitments made by the Israeli and Palestinian leaders to lasting peace and security for all in that region.

Our environment is of vital importance, and of singular concern to my Government. Our actions in the region and at the international level are dictated by a deep commitment to preserving it. Together with other countries in our region, we have initiated and concluded a series of treaty regimes, including those designed to protect the natural resources and environment of the South Pacific region and to establish the South Pacific nuclear-free zone to keep our region free of environmental pollution by radioactive wastes and other radioactive matter.

We will continue to supplement these efforts as the need arises. Indeed, leaders at the recent South Pacific Forum meeting in Papua New Guinea adopted the Treaty on the Control and Movement of Hazardous and Toxic Wastes in the South Pacific. Samoa did not hesitate to sign it.

Consistently over the years Samoa, together with our regional partners, has called for a permanent end to nuclear testing, the dumping of chemical and toxic wastes and the transportation of these materials in our waters.

From this account you will therefore understand our deep shock and distress when it was announced in June that France proposed to resume the testing of nuclear weapons in the Pacific. We sought, at the highest level, as many others did, to persuade the Government of France not to do so. We took action to register our concern and to protest and we sought to intervene in the proceedings brought by New Zealand against France in the International Court of Justice. Together with other Forum countries we moved to make direct representation to the Government of France — all to no avail.

The explosion of a nuclear device at Mururoa atoll early this month brings to close to 200 the number of underground nuclear tests France has carried out in the Pacific since 1975. Of the whole United Nations membership, Samoa is the closest to the test site.

The resumption of nuclear testing by France has been made in the face of strong and persistent protest from countries of the region, and equally strong and overwhelming condemnation from all parts of the world. The current tests are being conducted in the absence of any environmental impact assessments that we know of or have been advised of, and in the opinion of my Government in disregard of France's existing regional treaty obligations. Like other members of the South Pacific Forum, Samoa is outraged at the resumption of French nuclear testing in the Pacific — and, as I say, in the vicinity of my country. In the strongest possible terms we condemn it. We do so because of the extreme danger it poses to our environment and health, now and in the long term; and because the tests are completely contrary to the undertaking at the recent Non-Proliferation Treaty review Conference that nuclear States exercise utmost restraint in nuclear testing pending the completion of negotiations on a comprehensive test-ban treaty that would ban nuclear tests for all time.

We do welcome France's commitment to a comprehensive test-ban treaty, but that should not be used as an excuse for France to continue its nuclear testing in our region. For the sake of our environment and all who live there, we call on France to stop.

We call also, and once more, on the three nuclear Powers which have not yet signed and ratified the Protocols to the South Pacific Nuclear Free Zone Treaty to do so.

It is also out of deep concern for our environment that Samoa has taken every step possible to be engaged in the negotiations and in the implementation of the international conventions relating to climate change, biodiversity, marine pollution and the conservation of straddling and highly migratory fish stocks. Global warming and the threat of sea-level rise are matters of the gravest concern to my country and our region. Recently, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) reported that the warming of the global atmosphere is unlikely to be entirely due to natural causes. In other words, human activity is a definite cause that cannot be discounted.

While this is not entirely unexpected, the latest indication from the IPCC bears out the inadequacy of current Convention commitments for Annex I parties, and underlines the essential correctness, and the urgency, of the Berlin Mandate issued from the first Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change. For its part, Samoa will continue to work together with countries of the Alliance of Small Island States (AOSIS) towards the early acceptance of clear emission-reduction targets of the type advanced in the draft AOSIS Protocol.

In respect of fish stocks, let me take the opportunity to pay tribute to all the countries that worked so hard to produce the truly remarkable triumph in the form of the draft Agreement for the Implementation of the Provisions of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea relating to the Conservation and Management of Straddling Fish Stocks and Highly Migratory Fish Stocks. In particular, we express our gratitude to Ambassador Satya Nandan of Fiji for his exceptional skill and chairmanship.

This has been a landmark year on many counts; with the fiftieth anniversary commemoration we will celebrate next month the crowning event.

The Fourth World Conference on Women, in Beijing, is one such landmark. Samoa warmly applauds the unanimous adoption of the Platform for Action, and the remarkable degree of international consultation and cooperation that was employed to produce it. What is needed now is the highest degree of commitment and action, in close consultation with women at all levels. There would be little point in having yet another fine document without any prospect of implementation, and without the effort and the will to make concrete changes and improvements. And let it be remembered that such changes and improvements are not for women alone, but for the full development of mankind.

Without doubt, the extension of the Non-Proliferation Treaty was a major achievement for the world community this year. We congratulate Ambassador Dhanapala of Sri Lanka on his remarkable role and leadership in ensuring the successful outcome of the Review Conference.

The decisions we took then are essential to international peace and security, and the attainment of the ultimate goals of the complete elimination of nuclear weapons and a treaty on general and complete disarmament under strict and effective international control. The successful conclusion of a comprehensive nuclear-test-ban treaty by 1996 is a specific goal for the attainment of which all Member States of this body should strive with the utmost effort.

We pray that at the end of the presidency of Ambassador Freitas do Amaral of Portugal, the world

community will be able to celebrate the accomplishment of that objective.

The Acting President *(interpretation from French)*: I now call on the Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Colombia, His Excellency Mr. Rodrigo Pardo Garcia-Peña.

Mr. Pardo Garcia-Peña (Colombia)(*interpretation from Spanish*): On behalf of my Government I congratulate Mr. Freitas do Amaral of Portugal on his election to the presidency of the General Assembly at its fiftieth session, a crucial time in the history of the Organization. I should like at the outset to express our full readiness to make a major contribution to the success of the deliberations under his leadership.

I should also like to express our appreciation and gratitude to Minister Amara Essy of Côte d'Ivoire for his excellent performance as President of the General Assembly at its forty-ninth session.

The peoples of the world believed that the end of the cold war would bring peace and prosperity — and they are still waiting. Indeed the changes that have taken place in international relations have not been accompanied by changes of a similar magnitude in the relations between the industrialized North and the impoverished South. On the contrary, the situation of developing countries, far from having improved, is deteriorating further. The international trade system does not meet the expectations that there would be access to markets and transparency in the rules of the game. Poverty has not been reduced, social development is at a standstill, the scientific and technological development of the South continues to lag and the external debt problem is still a heavy burden on our economies.

It is our duty now to realize the dream of those who wrote the San Francisco Charter — something that has been postponed for 50 years by a cold war and dozens of regional conflicts and overshadowed by the grief of the victims of armed conflicts.

The period of transition through which the international system is passing should not lead us to accept so-called unilateral solutions to problems that are global in nature nor to permit the emergence of a new era of intervention in matters that lie within the domestic jurisdiction of States. There is an imperative need to concert policies and coordinate strategies to face international problems and to foster constructive links between North and South.

The United Nations, which was a stage for the cold war, must now cooperate in eradicating poverty, in making sustainable human development viable, in guaranteeing equality of rights between men and women and in giving full effect to human rights — in other words, it must work on behalf of human beings — all human beings — without distinction of any kind whatsoever. The United Nations has the responsibility to strive to make the hopes and expectations that arose at the end of the cold war a reality and not the source of new frustrations.

The current situation requires a modern United Nations attuned to the new times, a pluralistic and democratic Organization that will be an instrument for the promotion of a world order that can make the right to development a reality and achieve peace. The building of a new international system to replace the hegemonic, weapons-based and unilateral practices of the past is a goal towards which we must work from within this Organization.

The international system we aspire to create is one compatible with interdependence and autonomy, with the strengthening of the international organization and with full respect for the sovereign equality of States, one compatible with economic development and devoted to the significant improvement of the living conditions of the poorest segments of the population.

It is indispensable to forge a new economic model that can satisfy the needs of our people, one characterized by social justice and equity, efficiency and competitiveness. At the same time, we are convinced that genuine and representative democracy, free from foreign interference, must be the key element in preserving peace and observing the basic principles of respect for the fundamental rights of the human person and of economic and social development.

For the preservation of peace, security and international stability it is indispensable that the nuclear-weapon States act responsibly and immediately discontinue nuclear testing. In this regard, we deplore the recent nuclear tests that have been carried out, notwithstanding the opposition of the international community to that practice.

Next month the Eleventh Summit Meeting of the members of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries will take place in Cartagena de Indias, Colombia. My country looks forward to the attendance of leaders of developing nations and is prepared to shoulder the creative challenge of presiding over the Movement for the next three years.

In recent decades, under the leadership of His Excellency President Soeharto of Indonesia, the Non-Aligned Movement adopted a new course, one in tune with current reality, abandoning the confrontational context in favour of cooperation as the central focus of its action. We shall continue to pursue that task with enthusiasm.

With the same determination with which it succeeded in its struggle against colonialism, the non-aligned countries must now face the challenge of eradicating poverty and closing the vast gap between rich and poor and between developed and developing countries.

In the twenty-first century non-alignment will mean a commitment to peace and to the well-being and progress of our peoples, as well as action against poverty and marginalization. It will also entail a commitment to cooperation in dealing with global problems and a struggle for participation and against unilateralism and imposition.

In facing the next century, non-alignment must participate actively in the reform of international institutions, including the United Nations and the Bretton Woods institutions. Non-alignment must also promote the needed changes in the structures of cooperation and the dynamic modalities by which developed countries and international institutions provide resources for the implementation of projects and programmes of South-South cooperation.

One of the global problems that calls for an effective multilateral strategy headed by the United Nations is that of illegal drugs. This is not an issue that can be dealt with by a single country or small group of nations. This is a transnational crime of vast proportions, overwhelming dimensions and the greatest perils. It is a crime without nationality.

We Colombians have suffered more than anyone from the devastating effects of this problem. We have suffered death and corruption as a consequence of the huge profits to be derived from this illegal activity. We find it surprising, therefore, to note that the international community is not fully aware of the real nature and dimensions of the problem of illicit drugs.

We are dealing with an illegal economic activity with dimensions that have been compared with those of the oil industry. It is seven or eight times greater than the gross national product of a nation like Colombia; it operates in dozens of countries and entails a number of linked activities, including money laundering and the deviation of chemical precursors. Such linked activities generally take place in developed countries and are as important as the growing of coca leaves or their transformation into cocaine.

Many studies indicate an increase in the consumption of illegal drugs in industrialized countries as well as an increase in new markets throughout the world. World statistics demonstrate that deaths from drug abuse have trebled since 1988 and that an increase of 1000 per cent has been observed in medical emergencies due to cocaine overdose between 1978 and 1993.

My country has battled, with more success than any other, against the producers of and traffickers in illegal drugs. Colombia eradicated marihuana crops in the 1970s, destroyed the Medellín Cartel in the 1980s and dismantled the Cali Cartel in the 1990s.

Colombia is responsible for more than 50 per cent of the poppy crops eradicated worldwide and for the confiscation of more than a quarter of the total amount of cocaine and cocaine base seized globally.

The eradication of illegal crops in Colombia must be accompanied by similar efforts to bring about the eradication of marihuana crops in other countries, including in some industrialized countries in the North.

During the first year of President Ernesto Samper's Administration, the anti-drug cartel policy has produced results that no prior administration in Colombia, or in any other nation, has been able to achieve.

Thanks to Colombia's success, the world now has a historic opportunity to defeat drug trafficking once and for all. Yet this opportunity could be missed if adequate measures are not immediately adopted to combat money laundering, the deviation of precursor chemicals and permissive consumption.

My country has proposed creating a special unit of the Economic and Social Council to oversee measures of international cooperation, the adoption of an inter-American convention against money laundering and the convening in 1997 of an international conference to

evaluate the results of the Vienna Convention and to make the necessary adjustments to it.

There is still time for the international community to face up to its responsibility to bring about the final defeat of this international scourge.

The Acting President (*interpretation from French*): I now call on the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs of Turkmenistan, His Excellency Mr. Boris Shikhmuradov.

Mr. Shikhmuradov (Turkmenistan) (*interpretation from Russian*): Please allow me to offer sincere congratulations to Mr. Freitas do Amaral of Portugal on his election to the presidency of the General Assembly.

I would like to emphasize that this session of the General Assembly, in the year of the fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations, will occupy a special place in the history of the Organization. In that context, on behalf of Turkmenistan and President Niyazov, I wish to express our sincere appreciation to the Secretary-General, Mr. Boutros Boutros-Ghali, for his tireless efforts to build a new kind of international relations for the Organization.

The opportunity for our State to participate in the affairs of the world community as an independent entity flowed, of course, from those events that the Secretary-General, in his report on the work of the Organization, describes as

> "the momentum in world affairs that appeared so dramatically at the outset of this decade." *(A/50/1, para. 4)*

Serenely, and immensely grateful for its good fortune, Turkmenistan embarked on its independent course and, without any political romanticism, began to carry out its programme of building a nation-State and a system of foreign ties and seeking optimal ways for participating in international relations. This was a quest for Turkmenistan's place in the United Nations system and a model of statehood reflecting its national mentality and the traditions of the Turkmen people.

Since that time, in our four years of independent existence, we have travelled a great distance, and each step we have taken along the way has been both in the national interest of Turkmenistan and in the interest of stabilizing the region and strengthening international security, in the constant conviction that these two are inseparable.

After engaging in broad contacts within the system of Asian States, we have once again become convinced of the correctness of the conclusion drawn at the beginning of this century that Asia, with its enormous human, natural and intellectual resources, had every possibility of becoming the most prosperous region in the world. However, throughout the entire history of the Asian continent, instability and protracted regional conflicts have often, unfortunately, constituted the political background, and this has significantly complicated the solution of problems of internal development.

Turkmenistan has set as its main priority the preservation of internal stability and social peace in carrying out radical reforms in building its State and its economy. This is vitally necessary in order for us to take advantage of our enormous resource potential. But that important condition is not the only one: the other is stability around us so that we can freely and naturally develop our trade and economic relations with other States. This question is of special interest, in view of the world's share of hydrocarbon deposits and other mineral and biological resources that Turkmenistan possesses.

Turkmenistan is at one of the world's important crossroads of political and economic interests, in a regional dimension and beyond. Aware of this geopolitical reality, Turkmenistan is prepared to participate in the most constructive way in establishing new relations in the region and to promote efforts to establish there overall stability, security and effective and mutually advantageous cooperation on the basis of the principles of the United Nations.

We believe that with the breakup of the Soviet Union and the Iron Curtain's disappearance from its borders with its southern neighbours, a new region has emerged, a new community of States of Central Asia, the Middle East, South-West Asia, the Caucasus and part of the Near East. This region is united by common development interests, the restoration of historical trade and economic relations and cultural and humanitarian traditions.

This was the logic that led to the idea of active participation in the Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO). I would like to emphasize that the ECO's configuration fully corresponds to our concept of a new region's emergence following the disintegration of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics: the restoration of a natural gravitational attraction between these States that

for decades were artificially divided by an ideological barrier, which conditions for them the priority of transportation, telecommunications and energy programmes. Underlying these processes lies the principle of absolute economic feasibility, based on the mutual interests of the member States of the ECO and the absence of any political, territorial or other disputes between them.

As for the internal tensions that persist in some countries, we should stress that economic cooperation, participation and joint projects will create fertile soil for constructive solutions to these problems. Turkmenistan believes that this 10-country organization, emerging at such an important time, will open up additional possibilities for the newly independent States to the south of the former Union of Soviet Socialist Republics.

Furthermore, the basis of our political and economic strategy is the principle of reasonable pragmatism and the preservation of positive experiences and ties from the past. We have a politically new type of State. Its independent status cannot be achieved by denying the realities of the past and old ties that can still serve our higher interests today. In this respect, our relations with Russia and other partners in the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) have remained a key component of Turkmenistan's foreign policy.

I would like to lay special emphasis on the fact that the obligations that neutral Turkmenistan has assumed have been set out in our Constitution and have been supported by the people. These obligations not only take account of national interests but also objectively promote the development of cooperation in the region, and they have enormous potential for stimulating the peacemaking processes in the area and for promoting the efforts of the world community, primarily here at the United Nations, to rid it of obsolete measures and adopt preventive measures to defuse disputes and conflicts.

I would like to set out some parameters of Turkmenistan's neutrality initiative in order to make sure that it is correctly understood by our partners in the United Nations and supported by them as well.

The rapid pace of recent events determined the changes in Asia's geopolitical and geo-economic situation. The nature and direction of inter-State and regional processes, an important component of some of these changes, has resulted in the formation of new, independent States, each having chosen its own independent path of development and having its own interests. One of the ways in which the uniqueness of each country has been manifested is in its political path, as is natural. For each country that path is based on the people's historical roots, mentality and psychological make-up. Turkmenistan is no exception to this. Merging the prospects for its own development with the direction and nature of regional and continental processes and linking national interests with the objective requirements of the day — from this theoretical and practical basis we have arrived at the need to proclaim neutrality as a principle and instrument of Turkmenistan's foreign policy. We are pleased that our neutrality initiative is finding more and more support, attracting civil and political interest and receiving broad international recognition. We are grateful to the Secretary-General, Mr. Boutros Boutros-Ghali, for providing Turkmenistan with assistance in this regard.

In the context of asserting itself as a neutral State, Turkmenistan requested admission to the Non-Aligned Movement as a full-fledged member. We hope that during the non-aligned summit in Cartagena, Colombia, Turkmenistan's membership will be confirmed. In this context, I would like to state Turkmenistan's conviction that the idea of non-alignment is both a vital and a viable one. We do not share the view that it is archaic. We believe that we must not participate in the two conflicting global systems and that we need to turn to an idea of non-participation in the various rigid regional blocs, multi-State formations capable of generating considerable destructive force. Turkmenistan advocates non-alignment, as well as non-participation in improper acts of intervention in the internal affairs of States, non-participation in efforts for global or regional dominance and non-participation in schemes to limit the role of the United Nations or weaken the universal and proven machinery for implementing global policy. Such practices serve selfish purposes.

We are convinced that the use of military force to solve existing conflicts has no future, but that negotiations are effective. Although seeking peaceful means is complex, alternatives do not exist. At the same time, we understand that without active efforts, without good will, it will hardly be possible to attain the desired result. Therefore, *inter alia*, while not intervening in the Tajik conflict, we are prepared to play a role in holding the next round of inter-Tajik negotiations. We welcome and commend the peacemaking efforts of the United Nations and Russia, Iran, Pakistan and other countries in this process.

Naturally, we must be concerned at the situation unfolding in neighbouring Afghanistan. Supporting contacts with the central Government in Kabul, as well as with regional leaders, we believe that the Afghans must be helped to demonstrate their ability to achieve peace and consensus in their country, and that attempts to intervene in Afghanistan's internal affairs not only are counter-productive, but may lead to highly undesirable consequences. In that context, I would like to emphasize that Turkmenistan gives priority to the United Nations, to the Secretary-General's efforts to find an acceptable machinery for an Afghan settlement. Turkmenistan agrees with the concern expressed from this rostrum at the continuing internal Afghan conflict. Turkmenistan has a long border with this long-suffering State and is truly interested in finding a prompt settlement to the Afghan problem. We are also interested in the success of the special representative of the United Nations, who in our view requires serious support from the United Nations. We cannot allow a situation whereby efforts to focus on solving one conflict cause less attention to be paid to another, resulting in negative consequences.

Just as mankind has become aware that the nuclear threat has a global dimension, we are also aware that today we need an adequate response to all regional and local disputes and conflicts. I would like to emphasize that Ashkhabad is prepared to engage in constructive cooperation with the United Nations on these issues, and to demonstrate its commitment to the principles of constructive neutrality.

All countries and peoples are now adapting in their own ways to new conditions in the world, which dictate the need to adopt a common philosophy of security, based on the principle of security for one and security for all. I would like to emphasize that at this stage we are talking about a philosophy, of perceptions of the world, reflecting realities in Asian countries, in particular. This philosophy excludes the use of force, diktat, as a means of solving political disputes, and its main principles should include equality, humanism, social and economic progress, and healthy pragmatism.

Here I should like to support what was said by my colleague from Germany, Mr. Klaus Kinkel, who emphasized that we must not allow hostile stereotypes to become instilled in people's minds and that we cannot associate in one sweep Islam with terrorism and fundamentalism. We welcome this assertion and express our conviction that this attitude will become universal.

As for Turkmenistan, we are fundamental advocates of a secular State model, in which religion would play its proper role. We believe that, as has been emphasized by President Niyasov, a poly-ethnic, multi-faith State model and structure is more effective, more fruitful, than a mono-ethnic and mono-religious State.

I take this opportunity to emphasize the support that Turkmenistan has received, through its participation in the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), in European matters, as one of the legal successors of the former federated State. This has created for us, in a difficult transitional time of colossal transformations, the possibility of benefiting from Asian-European development. In that context, the words of the Minister for Foreign Affairs of France, Mr. Hervé de Charette, were very important for us, when he spoke about the States of Asia and Africa and about focusing on the first meeting of Heads of State of Asia and Africa, set for March 1996. We hope, within the context of activating work on the Euro-Asian bridge, that there will be other major projects, with the participation of Turkmenistan, on a direct window to Europe. Primarily, we are talking about a north-south transit corridor to link Europe and Asia, through the territory of Russia and Turkmenistan, facilitating the supply of Turkmen energy to European markets and so on.

I should like to emphasize that we have witnessed a significant, if not radical, increase in international interest in Caspian Sea matters, and the utilization of its abundant natural resources. Our conceptual approach to this is based on the idea that the Caspian Sea is a unique water basin and the common property of the five coastal States. In the making of plans for the development of its resources account should be taken of those States' interests; their consent should be required and no unilateral decisions should be taken. Turkmenistan firmly advocates the prevention of any naval activities in the Caspian Sea, and favours freedom of navigation, on the basis of a legal status to be developed by the littoral States. We must create legal and economic conditions that will guarantee a normal regime for foreign investment and exclude any risks for investors, such as the emergence of a situation of distrust between the States of the basin.

At the coming anniversary session of the General Assembly next month, President Niyasov will set forth the principles of the domestic and foreign policies of Turkmenistan, focusing on problems being taken up by the United Nations, an Organization reflecting the face of

mankind, which today faces a new millennium with its unique challenges and times and circumstances. We sincerely congratulate each other, and first and foremost congratulate the Secretary-General, as we are absolutely convinced that the United Nations, in this year of its fiftieth anniversary, will prove that it is essential to the world as the highest international assembly, developing an agenda for global partnership in the twenty-first century.

The President (*interpretation from French*): I shall now call on those representatives who wish to speak in exercise of the right of reply.

May I remind members that statements in exercise of the right of reply are limited to 10 minutes for the first, and five minutes for the second, and should be made by delegations from their seats.

Mr. Yañez-Barnuevo (Spain) (*interpretation from Spanish*): The Spanish delegation feels duty-bound to exercise its right of reply.

My delegation would like to refer to the mentions of the Spanish cities of Ceuta and Melilla contained in the statement made here today by the Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs and Cooperation of the Kingdom of Morocco. Such references are not in keeping with reality, since those are Spanish territories, whose citizens are represented in the Spanish Parliament with the same rights and under the same conditions as their compatriots, and it is not possible to establish any parallels with other situations which are quite different in nature.

Such references are not appropriate, since they are not in keeping with the overall relationship which exists between the Kingdoms of Spain and of Morocco, bilaterally as well as in the region as a whole, to which we both, as neighbours, belong.

Mr. Kamal (Pakistan): I am speaking in exercise of the right of reply because the Foreign Minister of India made a reference in his statement this morning to Jammu and Kashmir as a State in India. Jammu and Kashmir is a disputed territory and Pakistan is a party to this dispute. To describe the disputed territory of Jammu and Kashmir as a State in India is totally fallacious and a distortion of the facts as they are known to the United Nations. The relevant Security Council resolutions clearly determine that the final disposition of the State of Jammu and Kashmir will be made in accordance with the will of the people, expressed through the democratic method of a free and impartial plebiscite conducted under the auspices of the United Nations. The Indian claim that Kashmir is an integral part of India is therefore untenable and incorrect.

Only a week ago, the spokesperson of the Indian External Affairs Ministry, while commenting on the United Nations Secretary-General's offer of mediation on Kashmir, said that India remained fully committed to the resolution of the Kashmir issue peacefully, in accordance with the Simla Agreement. If Jammu and Kashmir was a part of the Indian Union, why would India appeal to the Government of Pakistan "to demonstrate sincerity in finding a peaceful solution to the Jammu and Kashmir problem"? Why would the Secretary-General want to offer his good offices on an Indian province? Or why would it be raised in international forums? The fact of the matter is that Jammu and Kashmir is an internationally recognized disputed territory.

The Indian Foreign Minister also described terrorism as the "black plague" of our times, and we fully agree. But he went on to say that it is specious logic to say that one man's freedom-fighter is another man's terrorist. The fact is that the United Nations has consistently underlined the distinction between terrorism, on the one hand, and the legitimate struggle of peoples under colonial or alien domination or foreign occupation for the realization of their right to self-determination and national liberation, on the other hand. The latter is exactly the situation in Jammu and Kashmir, where for the past 47 years an oppressed population has been struggling to seek liberation from the Indian yoke. Its struggle is not a movement for secession; it is not a violation of the territorial integrity of a country: it is the realization of a promise that was made to the people of Jammu and Kashmir by the United Nations and agreed to by India and Pakistan. No amount of distortion of history or attempts to cloud the issue by sidetracking it can change the irrefutable validity of Security Council resolutions freely accepted but subsequently reneged on by India.

Terrorism, in any case, should be condemned and opposed in all its forms and manifestations, including State-sponsored terrorism targeting people living under alien domination and foreign occupation. The United Nations should not appease the States that are involved in organized terrorism against the people of occupied territories. With 600,000 armed troops in Jammu and Kashmir terrorizing an innocent people, we are witnessing State-sponsored terrorism at its worst.

Reference was also made by the Foreign Minister of India to the unfortunate incident of hostage-taking in Kashmir. We have already had occasion to point out in this forum the mounting evidence of Indian complicity in this gruesome act. This time again, as in past instances, foreign tourists have been taken hostage by a group unknown to all, including to the 34-member All-Parties Hurriyet Conference. Al-Faran, a group which manages to operate with immunity in one of the most heavily soldiered regions of the world, a group which manages to stay in regular communication and contact with the Indian authorities, without their being able to trace it — all this is only part of the circumstantial evidence of a plot masterminded by Indian intelligence agencies to denigrate the Kashmiri struggle for freedom. No one here is gullible enough to accept Indian professions of piety.

Finally, the Indian Foreign Minister said that democracy alone is not a guarantee against colonial rule or wars. We agree. In fact, here is the so-called largest democracy in the world responsible for the largest operation of State-sponsored terrorism and the most gruesome human rights violations seen over the past 50 years.

Mr. Gaussot (France) (*interpretation from French*): Some opinions expressed today on nuclear tests, in the framework of the general debate, make it necessary for my delegation to set forth certain facts once again.

First of all, our underground nuclear tests are in no way detrimental to the environment; eminent scientists have demonstrated this on many occasions.

Secondly, the final tests, eight at the most, that France finds it necessary to carry out are not contrary to its commitment to exercise the utmost restraint. Restraint is not the same thing as prohibition. Furthermore — and this point is fundamental — far from being contrary to the conclusion of a comprehensive test-ban treaty, the last programme of tests now under way serves the achievement of that goal. Indeed, because of this final programme of tests, to be concluded before the end of May 1996, France will be in a position to commit itself to such an international agreement without any reservations.

Furthermore, the completion of our tests will make it possible for my country to argue resolutely for what is known as the zero-option — that is, for a treaty prohibiting any nuclear-weapons testing or any other nuclear explosion, at any level. France, as the Assembly knows, was the first nuclear Power to commit itself to this essential option, and my delegation is pleased to see that several States have welcomed that commitment.

The most recent French tests thus come within the context of, and must be seen from the point of view of, the impending conclusion of a truly significant treaty, namely a treaty that does not envisage any exception or allow for any circumvention.

Ms. Murugesan (India): The representative of Pakistan does not tire of wasting the valuable time of this Assembly. The unfounded and baseless allegations he has just made are only a reflection of the frustration that is axiomatic when truth is pushed under the carpet and an attempt is made to build an edifice on falsehood. Or is this latest outburst reflective of a guilty conscience? It is no doubt a mixture of the two.

I am intrigued that the representative of Pakistan has chosen to exercise his right of reply in response to the statement made earlier today in the Assembly by the leader of my delegation. I do not recall, nor I am sure can anyone else in this Assembly recall, any reference to Pakistan in our statement today. We can therefore draw the only possible logical conclusion: that Pakistan is actively engaged in interfering in the internal affairs of India.

Blaming India is so juvenile a reaction to Pakistan's own culpability in sponsoring, supporting and sustaining terrorism in its most brutal form in India that it deserves no response. Such an allegation from a State that has turned its armed might against its own people is ironic, to say the least.

The only impediment to dialogue between India and Pakistan is Pakistan's continued export of terrorism in its most brutal form into India. Pakistan's greed for Indian territory has fuelled three wars which, by the acknowledgement of Pakistan's own generals, were started by Pakistan; and since 1989, that greed has fuelled Pakistan's proxy war in Jammu and Kashmir through terrorism. This is the distinction in Jammu and Kashmir between terrorism and self-determination. Self-determination here is predetermination by Pakistan.

Pakistan should be condemned by the international community as a sponsor of terrorism in all its forms and manifestations — cross-border, State-sponsored terrorism in India and Afghanistan, ongoing State terrorism against ethnic minorities in Sind, clear linkages to international terrorism such as the World Trade Center bombing, and

several other incidents in the Middle East. The terrorist camps and schools run by Pakistan should be shut down.

Our official spokesman stated on 21 September that in spite of the numerous provocations by Pakistan, the Indian security forces have exercised enormous restraint. There is no threat to peace and security in the region from the Indian side of the Line of Control or the international border. The Government of India hopes that the Government of Pakistan would demonstrate sincerity in finding a peaceful solution by eschewing sponsorship of terrorism across the Line of Control and returning to the negotiating table for a meaningful dialogue.

Mr. Kamal (Pakistan): Once again we have heard one of India's representatives trying to hide their own guilt behind non-relevant arguments. We dismiss their allegations with the contempt that they deserve. The central and only point that has to be addressed is that of the disputed territory of Jammu and Kashmir.

Can the Indian representative deny that the United Nations, of which this Assembly is a constituent part, duly recognizes Jammu and Kashmir as a disputed territory? Can she deny that the Security Council resolutions clearly state that the future of Jammu and Kashmir is to be determined by a plebiscite, to be held under the auspices of the United Nations? Can she deny that the Security Council resolutions remain valid and operative until they are fully implemented? Can she deny that the concentration of Indian troops in Kashmir is the largest such concentration since the Second World War, with a ratio of one Indian soldier to every three adult male Kashmiris? Can she deny the systematic killing, torture and rape of civilians by Indian troops or the torching of their homes, villages and townships, as documented by so many human rights organizations? Can she deny the excellent means of communication that exist between Indian security and intelligence forces and the Al-Faran outfit, which has taken innocent Western tourists hostage and beheaded one of them?

Can she deny that it is India that has opposed the proposal by Pakistan for an increased strengthening of the United Nations Military Observer Group in India and Pakistan (UNMOGIP) along the Line of Control, so that these facile allegations of theirs can be monitored by the United Nations itself? Can she deny, finally, that despite repeated proposals by Pakistan, it is India that has rejected the offer for an independent, neutral international fact-finding mission to visit both sides of the Line of Control, to establish once and for all what is the true state of affairs in this disputed territory of Jammu and Kashmir?

These are the relevant questions, to which we, and this Assembly, want clear answers from the Indian delegation. They are entitled to a reply to a statement in right of reply. We challenge them to come on record to answer these questions in front of the Assembly.

Mr. Surie (India): I have no intention of further dignifying the representative of Pakistan by wasting the time of this Assembly. However, I would only urge Pakistan to look deep within itself and cleanse itself of the devil that lurks within.

Jammu and Kashmir is, and shall remain, an integral part of India. This is an immutable fact.

The meeting rose at 7.35 p.m.

United Nations A/50/PV.14

General Assembly

Official Records

Fiftieth Session

14th plenary meeting
Monday, 2 October 1995, 10 a.m.
New York

President: Mr. Freitas do Amaral . . . . . (Portugal)

In the absence of the President, Mr. Reyn (Belgium), Vice-President, took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 10.15 a.m.

Agenda item 9 (*continued*)

General debate

Address by Mr. Janez Drnovšek, Prime Minister of the Republic of Slovenia

The Acting President (*interpretation from French*): The Assembly will first hear a statement by the Prime Minister of the Republic of Slovenia.

Mr. Janez Drnovšek, Prime Minister of the Republic of Slovenia, was escorted to the rostrum.

The Acting President (*interpretation from French*): I have great pleasure in welcoming the Prime Minister of the Republic of Slovenia, His Excellency Mr. Janez Drnovšek, and inviting him to address the General Assembly.

Mr. Drnovšek (Slovenia): It is a great pleasure to see Mr. Diogo Freitas do Amaral presiding over the important proceedings of the fiftieth session of the General Assembly. We are confident that under his guidance this session will be a great success.

The fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations gives us a reason and an opportunity to reflect on the state of the United Nations and on the question of its ability to adjust to a changing world. This is especially necessary in our times. We have witnessed in the short span of the last few years a variety of changes which have affirmed the global nature of all the basic issues facing mankind.

An array of United Nations conferences and summits has strengthened our common awareness of the global nature of environmental and development issues, including those related to social development. The world-wide tendency towards democracy and the freedom of the individual has strengthened the world-wide cause of human rights. The notion of our common security is being redefined and globalized. It now contains not only military and political, but also economic, social and environmental components.

This session of the General Assembly began less than two weeks after the conclusion of the Fourth World Conference on Women. That conference amply demonstrated the depth and the global nature of the changes that are at hand. The equality of women and the realization of the human rights of women are now among the priority issues on the international agenda.

The United Nations has highlighted the sensitivity of the organized international community to the crucial issues facing the world and the Organization's ability to provide a framework for articulating the main objectives and commitments. It has also demonstrated the ability to

95-86160 (E)

This record contains the original text of speeches delivered in English and interpretations of speeches delivered in the other languages. Corrections should be submitted to original speeches only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and be sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned, *within one month of the date of the meeting*, to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, Room C-178. Corrections will be issued after the end of the session in a consolidated corrigendum.

formulate principal policy objectives. On the other hand, however, the United Nations has yet to prove its ability to organize effective international cooperation for the realization of voluntary, agreed objectives and commitments. This is a more difficult task, and much is left to be desired in our fulfilment of it.

Furthermore, it is in this context that the question of reform of the United Nations system arises. Reforms are needed to respond to profound changes in international relations and should be much more far-reaching and carefully focused than is currently the case. So, for example, reforms in the economic and social domains should duly take into account the transformation of the world economy and the ever growing importance of market forces, private-initiative entrepreneurship and free trade. In these circumstances there is no place for the creation of unnecessary supra-State structures. What is needed, however, is carefully targeted operational cooperation for development and high-level dialogue capable of assisting Member States to formulate the most effective economic and social policies.

The functional commissions of the Economic and Social Council should become places where decision makers both from Governments and from non-governmental sectors meet and devise specific strategies. New schemes of cooperation among governmental and non-governmental sectors are needed, not least to develop appropriate models for financing the relevant priorities in the fields of environment and social development.

Careful thinking and responsible action are necessary for the strengthening of international peace and security. Each of the diverse priorities in this domain will require serious efforts if satisfactory solutions are to be possible. However, there are also fears that the will to reach them has not yet been mobilized.

Another priority area of United Nations action for the strengthening of international peace and security concerns the necessary reform of the principal United Nations body in this field, the Security Council. An awareness of the need to strengthen the representative character and the effectiveness of the Security Council through expansion of its membership is now generally shared. Slovenia is among those Members of the United Nations which support the idea of appropriate expansion of the number of both permanent and non-permanent seats on the Security Council. This is the majority view now. Furthermore, we believe that in order to reflect adequately the political and economic realities of our time it is important that Germany and Japan should become permanent members of the Security Council.

In the framework of the proposed reform, we should ask ourselves what the future role of the United Nations ought to be. After the fall of the Berlin Wall, after the disappearance of the communist bloc, there is a new situation in the world. The process is basically positive, but in the first years after the big change there are still many questions to be answered. The world must find new stability, a new balance. The danger of regional conflicts and wars has increased. The international community did not find adequate responses to specific situations, such as those in Somalia and Bosnia and Herzegovina.

But we cannot simply say that international institutions, including the United Nations, were inefficient in dealing with these situations. The humanitarian endeavour and contribution were significant. Many remarkable efforts were put into solutions — efforts by individuals and by institutions. But it remains clear that the world must find answers to the new challenges.

The situation in Bosnia and Herzegovina is a very good example. It is an important case in itself, but it is also a very important precedent to be considered in the future. The response of the world to the situation in the former Yugoslavia was slow. Preventive diplomacy failed in this case, as in many other crises, as a result of the normal behaviour of the majority of politicians, who usually give priority to domestic situations and problems. But in the case of Bosnia and Herzegovina there is another very important dimension of the problem: a solution or the absence of a solution will influence the future.

How will the post-cold-war world develop? Will there be efficient international coordination, mainly within the United Nations, to take care of such problems and crises? Or shall we go back to the old division of the world and of Europe: the division, in interest spheres, among classic Powers — the traditional interest spheres of the most important countries?

It is obvious that in the case of Bosnia and Herzegovina there was some mix of the two approaches. There was an international effort in the framework of the United Nations, and there were differences among some power States with different opinions about the situation. Bosnia and Herzegovina is where the First World War started, when the old European Powers tried to expand their interest zones. The former Yugoslavia was at the

crossroads of many interests and is where so many horrors and killings took place during the Second World War. And there are some signs that the international community has not yet completely overcome such historical divisions and influences.

On the other hand, we cannot say that this historical approach prevailed in tackling the situation in Bosnia and Herzegovina. There was also strong international action in the name of the universal order and universal values, in the name of the protection of human rights, in the name of the protection of the rights of all nations. It is very encouraging that we recently witnessed really serious activity, a very serious peace plan. Diplomatic activity combined with the necessary military action has for the first time provided a realistic chance to stop the war and the killing in Bosnia and Herzegovina and to establish a durable peace and the prospect of stability in the region.

If these activities succeed, they will be an extremely important model for the future, for further development of international coordination in the framework of the United Nations. If the international community is able to solve such an extremely difficult case as that of Bosnia and Herzegovina we shall all be encouraged to direct new energy and efforts towards establishing global instruments and activities to prevent and to solve future crises. The international community will strengthen its institutions in support of universal values and rights.

If it fails in this case the situation will be just the opposite. The road will be open to anarchy, chaos and regional wars, to the rule of the stronger, to the old practices of spheres of interest, and the world will not find a way out of the post-cold-war situation. Instability will increase, and the chances of regional and global wars will be greater.

So we are at a very important moment in history and in the functioning of the United Nations. If the fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations is celebrated with success in finally solving the crisis in the former Yugoslavia, this will be the best reward for everybody who, over the past 50 years, has sacrificed his time, his energy or even his life for the establishment of a world of freedom, stability and international cooperation.

Of course, there are many problems to be solved in the future. The United Nations will have to develop efficient instruments of preventive diplomacy and means of handling crises if they occur anyway and of defining the criteria as to when and how to intervene. As is very evident from the case of Bosnia and Herzegovina, it is not always easy to achieve a unanimous definition of "the bad guys" in the world order or to agree upon action against them. But there are human rights criteria, and there are universal values that were developed in the world over the centuries, and especially during recent decades. These have to be respected and implemented.

Luckily, Slovenia was out of the Yugoslav crisis at a very early stage and established its independence four years ago. Now we have a very prosperous State with good democratic performance and very good economic development. Slovenia is considered one of the best countries, if not the best country, in transition to the market and democratic system. We are also prepared to make our contribution to building the international institutions and the coordination that will lead to greater stability in the world. We see our future as being in international institutions like the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) and the European Union. We look upon such bodies not only as economic or defence institutions but also as institutions that should ensure greater stability in the world, greater democracy and the development of universal principles of individual and collective human rights.

But we can see that the way is not easy. Even in our own neighbourhood we face some remnants of the past. This is just one further reason for our insistence on respect by everybody, and not just by the smaller and the weaker countries, for principle in international relations, democracy and universal values. This is the only guarantee of international peace and stability. Clearly, if we start to correct the past and the present on the basis of some historical tendencies of domination, there will be no way of securing the future stability of the world. The solution lies only in overcoming such practices and attitudes and in establishing international cooperation, peace and stability on the basis of respect for each other and for universal human rights.

The Acting President (*interpretation from French*): On behalf of the General Assembly, I wish to thank the Prime Minister of the Republic of Slovenia for the important statement he has just made.

Mr. Janez Drnovsek, Prime Minister of the Republic of Slovenia, was escorted from the rostrum.

The President (*interpretation from French*): The next speaker is the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Israel, Mr. Shimon Peres, upon whom I call.

Mr. Peres (Israel): I should like to congratulate Mr. Freitas do Amaral on his election to the presidency of the General Assembly. We are glad that a representative of Portugal, a nation for which Israel has high regard, was elected to that distinguished post.

I would like to express to the Secretary-General, Mr. Boutros Boutros-Ghali, a man of our region and a man of peace, our deepest appreciation for his contribution to world peace in general and to the Middle East peace in particular.

Tomorrow, the Jewish people will pray on the day of *Yom Ha-Kippurim*:

(*spoke in Hebrew; English text furnished by the delegation*)

> "In the Book of Life: blessings, peace, a good livelihood, good decrees, salvation and consolation. May you be remembered and inscribed."

(*spoke in English*)

We pray for all humanity, for the whole world.

For us, the United Nations is not just a place of prayer and surely not a platform for speeches. We come here to state our convictions and to announce our commitments. In our address in 1987, I stated on behalf of the State of Israel:

> "We have found President Mubarak of Egypt to be a builder of a better life for his people and of bridges for a comprehensive peace in the region." *(Official Records of the General Assembly, Forty-second Session, Plenary Meetings, 17th meeting, p. 23-25)*

Today, under the leadership of President Mubarak, Egypt is becoming a centre for regional development on the way to hosting the first regional bank of development.

In the same address, we stated:

> "An international conference is the door to direct negotiations. Once convened it should lead immediately to face-to-face bilateral negotiations." *(Ibid., p. 26)*

On 30 October, 1991, the Madrid Conference took place.

In 1992, again we declared:

> "The opportunity to select, through democratic political elections, the Palestinian administrative council will enable the Palestinian people to exercise a double measure of freedom: the freedom to govern their own lives and to do so ... democratically." *(Ibid., Forty-seventh Session, Plenary Meetings, 20th meeting, p. 48)*

Last week, we achieved wnat we promised.

Lastly, in 1993, we declared again from this rostrum:

> "Geographically speaking, we live side by side with the Jordanian Kingdom, and what is so obvious geographically must become clear politically [so that] we can offer the people of both sides of the river full peace, that the Dead Sea can become a spring of new life." *(Ibid., Forty-eighth Session, Plenary Meetings, 6th meeting, p. 22)*

In October 1994, just one year later, Jordan and Israel signed a peace treaty.

Last year, we said here:

> "All countries of the Middle East face a choice: to remain politically divided and economically stagnant or to become economically advanced and politically just.
>
> "... We shall try to establish instruments for development: a regional bank, channels for private investment and a framework for regional planning." *(Ibid., Forty-ninth Session, Plenary Meetings, 10th meeting, p. 16)*

In October 1994, the first Middle East-North African economic summit was held in Casablanca under the splendid presidency of His Majesty King Hassan II. At the end of this month, a second summit will be held in Amman under the auspices of His Majesty King Hussein. At the end of November, the first ground-breaking Euro-Mediterranean conference will be held in Barcelona.

Three years, five promises: all of them fulfilled. I would like to use this occasion to turn to the Syrians and to turn to the Lebanese and ask them to stop hesitating, to stop wandering. They have to look at this record and come in and follow up. The President of Syria has said that from experience he has learned that only through military negotiations and making security the major

agenda item can one achieve peace. Sorry: Experience has shown that through negotiation on all levels, embracing all issues without timidity, without fatigue, we can achieve peace. If leaders meet and are not successful at the first meeting, they will have another meeting. How can it be wrong for them to work day and night, ceaselessly, with new ideas and new approaches? They are not wasting the leaders' time; they are wasting the time of the people — their fortunes, their happiness, opportunities for the younger generation.

We also tell all the countries of the Middle East, not that we want to have a new Middle East, but that we want the Middle East to join in a new age — for the good of their people, not for the good of Israel. Israel is in good shape because we are no longer living in a world where there are empires of power and colonies of poverty. Poverty and oppression are home-made, not imposed by others. The choice is before every country to become free and prosperous and democratic, like so many nations have done in a relatively short time in Asia, Latin America and in some countries of Africa. It is their choice, their opportunity not just to build a different world but to introduce the new world to their own people.

For us, the United States is not an empire of power. We are not afraid of the United States. For us, the United States is an empire of peace. We need the United States. For us, Russia is going through a process of change. Russia will remain great but will become something different. For us, we welcome the European contribution to other countries east and south of them and the convening of the Barcelona conference to offer the Mediterranean peoples funds and experience to build a new life. We are glad that Japan is expanding its economic horizons and understanding and contributing so that other nations can do so. And we hope that other well-to-do countries in the Middle East, including Arab countries, will help the needy parts of our own region.

May I say that in my best judgement the greatest danger is a combination of high technology and deep hatred, of modern instruments and feudalistic views, and the greatest hope for all of us is a double effort to respect human values and modern education.

Israel itself is in good shape. We are strong militarily: I do not deny it. We have an excellent economy — an economy of brains, not of material resources. We have absorbed a very large immigration of white and black Jews, white Jews from Russia and black Jews from Ethiopia, and nobody can understand what put Israel in such a relatively good position.

What brought this about is, first of all, the return to the moral choice. By the end of this year — at the latest at the beginning of next year — not one Palestinian will remain under our control. For the first time in the history of the Palestinian people, they are educating their children without intervention by us or anybody else. Nobody forces us to do so. We are not weak. We are not poor. We are not under pressure. We have had to take serious risks because terror still continues. The Arab boycott is still intact.

In our own country there is strong opposition to what we are doing. We have had to spend a great part of our budget to make peace — and yet, despite all this, we decided to make a moral choice: not to dominate another people. We stated in this Assembly that that was our intention. Now we have done it and even politically, as difficult as it may be at home — because, as a party, we may win historically but we may also lose politically — but then, winning peace is in our eyes more important than winning elections. Why should you be elected if you do not use the mandate of the people to change the course of your history in a reasoned, moral way?

We believe that the strength of ethical judgement is as important as military exercises or triumphs. We gave up land and produced instead an economy of brains. Today Israel is making out of its brains more than some other countries in our vicinity are making out of oil.

And what we actually expect from the Palestinians is for them to become democratic, to be prosperous, to fight violence and terror, and we are giving our neighbours a simple message: What we can do, everybody can do.

For many years there was a legend that only the North, which is white and wealthy and permanent, is a success story, whereas the South is condemned to backwardness, to poverty, to lagging behind. What has happened in Asia, where the most vibrant economic endeavours are taking place today, and what is happening in Latin America show that the economy has nothing to do with geographical location or the colour of the skin. Make the right choice: serve your people and create a new future.

What we are offering to anyone who is interested is our experience — open, in a comradely way. We do not

want to dominate anybody and certainly not anybody's economy. We did not give up the domination of people to gain domination of markets. And we are suggesting to our neighbours — and we are happy that they have accepted — is that the new frontiers — say, between Jordan and Israel — will not be frontiers of mines and hostile fences, but an occasion for joint ventures.

The whole rift of Africa, the whole valley which is a desert that separates the Jordanians and us will become, with God's help, a source for work, for development. We will build hotels and schools and desalination plants and parks, and people will be free to move from one side to the other, competing without hating, cooperating without dominating.

We want to do the same about the dividing line between us and the Palestinians: we want to build alongside the line on the West Bank and Gaza eight industrial parks so that the Palestinians will not have to cross the border and go through Israel's checkpoints: instead, work will come to them, and together we shall invest and together we shall develop.

A better economy is the best guarantee of peace. Actually, there cannot be economic cooperation without political understanding. Recently, while we were negotiating we created three zones of security sensibility on the West Bank — zone A, zone B and zone C. Then we turned to water and electricity and we asked the water and the current to submit to our political wisdom, but the electricity and the water people said that they did not distinguish between A, B and C. Water flows according to nature and not according to artificial agreements, and electric current does not stop at A or B or C. They serve everybody.

Today in the Middle East as elsewhere, the distinction is no longer ideological or religious or national. There is just one distinction between an old, poor, backward economy and a new age where economies are based on technology and science and where the natural resource is schools for the children and not the mines of the Gulf. Everybody can postpone the choice but nobody can escape it.

Our aim is to have peace so as to serve our people; to have education so as to equip our children to take advantage of the new age, to be equal to others and to compete with other children. It cannot remain a peace between leaders: it must become a peace for the people, now and in the future.

I started by showing what has happened in three or four short years. It is a revolution. It is a beginning. We should not stop in the middle. Let everybody pray to the Lord in the language he is used to. Let everybody respect his own tradition, his own heritage. Let everybody respect the special experience of a people, of a nation. But let all of us give up unnecessary hatred, untold suspicion. Let us give up barricading ourselves behind old dogmas and terrible prejudices. Let us help the people and the future. Then the 50 years of the United Nations will offer not just 50 years without war but the coming 50 years with peace and prosperity.

The Acting President (*interpretation from French*): I now call on the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Indonesia, His Excellency Mr. Ali Alatas.

Mr. Alatas (Indonesia): On behalf of the Indonesian delegation I should like to offer our congratulations to Mr. Freitas do Amaral of Portugal on his election as President of the fiftieth session of the General Assembly. We are confident that under his able guidance we will make substantive progress in our work.

To his distinguished predecessor, Mr. Amara Essy of Côte d'Ivoire, I should like to convey our deep appreciation for the exemplary manner in which he presided over the Assembly at the last session.

I also wish to pay tribute to our esteemed Secretary-General, Mr. Boutros Boutros-Ghali, for his dedicated endeavours in pursuing the objectives of the United Nations Charter and for his untiring efforts for the cause of peace and development.

We observe the fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations at a most crucial time in the history of humankind. In this post-cold-war era, we have been confronted by global changes so profound and massive that we are just beginning to understand some of their ramifications. These changes have generated challenges and contradictory trends in international relations which have cast a dark shadow on our contemporary world and intensified our sense of uncertainty as we stand on the threshold of a new century. On the other hand, a deepening sense of interdependence has prompted nations to devise more equitable and mutually beneficial patterns of cooperation — and this has provided us with a new source of hope. Fittingly indeed, on this fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations, hope is the dominant feeling in the world today just as it was hope, for a more

peaceful and tolerant world, which inspired the founding of the United Nations in San Francisco half a century ago.

With the Second World War barely over, the international community of that time sought to establish a world organization which would "save succeeding generations from the scourge of war" by instituting a system of collective security based on the repudiation of the use of force "save in the common interest", and on the basic principles of sovereign equality, freedom, justice and the rule of law. This splendid vision was not to be realized, for soon the cold war set in between two rival military and ideological blocs locked in a struggle for dominance. Power politics and the quest for hegemony and spheres of influence paralysed the collective security system. That may be why the United Nations has not been able to prevent the more than 150 armed conflicts which, since its founding, have erupted in various parts of the world, taking a horrible toll in human lives and material devastation. And that also partly explains the persistence of inequities and imbalances in international economic relations.

The United Nations was but a decade old when the first generation of leaders of Asia and Africa, reacting to the debilitating effects of the cold war and the problems besetting the world at the time, met in Bandung to articulate a new ethos which would reaffirm the ideals and principles enshrined in the United Nations Charter and govern relationships between and among nations, great and small. Thus in 1955 the leaders of Asia and Africa laid down the "*Dasa Sila* of Bandung" — the "Ten Principles of Bandung" — which embodied fundamental principles of inter-State relations in accordance with the spirit of the United Nations Charter.

The seeds that germinated in Bandung took firm root six years later in Belgrade with the formal institution of the Non-Aligned Movement. Since then, the Movement has served as a moral and political force that provided an alternative vision to the bloc politics of the cold war. Pursuing that vision, the Movement contributed to the triumph of such causes as the world-wide struggle against colonialism; the drive against institutionalized racism, particularly apartheid; the advocacy for nuclear disarmament, which is finally under way; and, lately, the launching of a global partnership for development. It is no coincidence that these are the very same issues as those on the agenda of the United Nations, for it is precisely within the United Nations and through its processes and institutions that the Non-Aligned Movement has waged its struggles for, and pursued its advocacy of, the principles and ideas enshrined in the United Nations Charter and reiterated in the *Dasa Sila* of Bandung. There is no doubt that the United Nations has served as the principal instrument for the amelioration of the human condition through the pursuit of peace and development.

In spite of the constraints to its system of collective security, the United Nations has nevertheless undertaken a large number of peace-keeping and peacemaking operations. Admittedly, not all United Nations peace-keeping efforts have been regarded as successful, but they have consistently promoted progress in negotiations between the parties in conflict. In the process the United Nations has expanded the meaning of peace-keeping beyond mere impartial interposition to include the protection of humanitarian aid, refugees and displaced persons as well as assistance to countries holding elections. Even the set-backs and difficulties encountered in peace-keeping operations have yielded useful insights that could help secure the success of similar undertakings in the future.

With the implementation of "An Agenda for Peace" and its Supplement, further progress may be expected, not only in peace-keeping but also in preventive diplomacy, peacemaking, post-conflict peace-building and the complementary role of regional organizations in maintaining peace and security.

We are heartened that the Agenda for Peace has been complemented with "An Agenda for Development", which would not only enhance the capability of United Nations to do its work in the economic and social spheres but which will also facilitate the forging of a global partnership for development.

However, the United Nations is much more than a forum for maintaining security, resolving conflicts and keeping the peace. The Organization, its specialized agencies and related institutions have been engaged in an immense array of activities that touch every aspect of people's lives all over the world.

It is therefore most regrettable to note that the severest financial crisis in the history of the United Nations casts a dark shadow over the fiftieth anniversary. In particular, the failure of one major Member State to meet its obligations by withholding legally obligated contributions is not only contrary to Article 17 of the Charter but has also driven the Organization to the very brink of insolvency. This aggravating situation has forced the Secretary-General to try to resolve the crisis through

postponing reimbursements to the troop-contributing countries. This places an unfair burden on those countries and penalizes especially the developing countries among them. If the situation were to continue without urgent and effective measures being taken to resolve it, peace-keeping operations would grind to a halt and all our endeavours to maintain peace and security would be endangered. The fiftieth anniversary presents us with an opportunity to address this fundamental issue of the United Nations insolvency at the highest political level, including possible recourse to innovative global taxation schemes.

The achievements of the United Nations over the past five decades make a compelling case for the further strengthening of multilateral cooperation, and we believe that the United Nations can be an even better instrument of multilateral cooperation if we act with greater purpose and determination in rectifying its inadequacies and shortcomings through a comprehensive process of restructuring, revitalization and democratization.

My delegation is therefore gratified that steps have been taken to revitalize the role of the General Assembly, including the reorganization of its Committee structures and the streamlining of its agenda for greater efficiency and efficacy.

Indonesia also believes that the membership of the Security Council, including its permanent members, should be increased so as to reflect the changed international situation since 1945 and to accommodate the interests and concerns of developing countries, which comprise the overwhelming majority of the Organization. It is a glaring anomaly that on the roster of permanent members of the Council Europe is overrepresented, Asia is underrepresented and Africa and Latin America are not represented at all. We are also of the view that additional permanent members should be chosen on the basis, not only of equitable geographical representation, but also of such objective criteria as the political, economic and demographic weight of a country, its capability and proven track record of contributing to the promotion of peace, security and development, both regionally and globally, and its commitment to assume the responsibilities inherent in permanent membership. It may also be timely and pertinent to review the manner in which the veto is exercised at present with a view to mitigating its arbitrary use and to ensuring a more democratic decision-making process.

One central challenge not yet fully met by the United Nations in its fiftieth year is that of general disarmament, particularly in its nuclear dimension. The 1995 Review and Extension Conference of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) adopted three decisions, namely, to extend the Treaty indefinitely, to strengthen its review process and to agree on certain principles and objectives for non-proliferation and disarmament. Yet the Conference failed to address the inequalities inherent in the Treaty. Issues long identified as crucial components of the non-proliferation regime were marginalized. The indefinite extension of the NPT removed the element of urgency from obligations under article VI of the Treaty, which may legitimize existing nuclear arsenals and perpetuate their further modernization. Hence, our priority agenda in the disarmament field should continue to be one of seeking further deep reductions in those arsenals with a view to their ultimate, total elimination, curbing the horizontal and vertical proliferation of nuclear weapons, banning the production of fissile materials for weapons purposes, ensuring the peaceful applications of nuclear technology on a predictable and long-term basis, initiating negotiations towards an international convention on security assurances to non-nuclear States, and concluding the ongoing negotiations on a comprehensive test-ban treaty.

It is in this context that we have deplored the underground testing by France and China, not only because of health and environmental considerations but precisely because it contravenes the spirit of the 1995 Review and Extension Conference of the NPT and undermines the ongoing efforts to conclude a comprehensive test-ban treaty. While urging the nuclear Powers to desist from conducting further tests, we believe it is imperative that concerted efforts should now be directed at achieving a treaty banning nuclear testing in all environments and for all time, without any loopholes or exceptions, by 1996.

Perhaps the greatest tragedy of recent times is that which has befallen the people of Bosnia and Herzegovina. The brutal aggression perpetrated again this independent Member State of the United Nations and the slaughter and "ethnic cleansing" of its people have shocked the whole world. Denied its legitimate right to defend itself as a result of an unjust arms embargo, Bosnia and Herzegovina faces the prospect of the forcible dismantling of its multicultural, multi-ethnic and multireligious society and the erosion of its internationally recognized sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity.

The major Powers, which early on could have put an end to this tragedy, have failed the cause of justice and of a principled solution, offering instead rationalizations for what clearly amounts to a policy of appeasement. Only now, after an excruciating wait, have the United Nations and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) finally taken firm action. On the ground, the tide of battle seems to be turning, while at the same time a new peace process is unfolding which appears to have some viability. Indonesia welcomes the accords recently reached between the Foreign Ministers of the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina, the Republic of Croatia and the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, comprised of a set of broad principles that are to govern a peaceful settlement of the conflict in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Developments have thus entered a crucial stage, and it is of paramount importance for the international community to ensure that neither an unjust nor an unworkable peace be forced on Bosnia and Herzegovina.

In this regard, President Soeharto has offered Indonesia's good offices to facilitate a peace process based on direct negotiations among the leaders of the States directly involved in the conflict. These negotiations should be conducted on the basis of certain basic principles, such as peaceful coexistence and non-interference in internal affairs. Any settlement should take into account existing United Nations resolutions and existing proposals for settlement and should entail mutual recognition by the States that were components of the former Yugoslavia, respect for internationally recognized boundaries and protection of minorities. Furthermore, the process should proceed in stages, from direct negotiations between the leaders themselves to an appropriately structured international conference, to be held when agreement has been reached on the basic elements of a settlement.

In the Middle East the pursuit of peace has continued to gather momentum. The historic Declaration of Principles signed two years ago was bolstered by the agreement reached last week between the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) and Israel, which calls for an extension of Palestinian self-rule in the occupied territories, phased withdrawal of Israeli forces and free elections for a Palestinian Council, thereby paving the way for a final settlement of the Palestinian-Israeli dimension of the Arab-Israeli conflict. Indonesia welcomes the agreement as an important watershed in the Middle East peace process. But the path to a lasting peace still faces major hurdles and challenges, including those posed by Israeli settlements in the West Bank, the unresolved question of Palestinian refugees 50 years after they were forced to flee their homeland and the status of Al-Quds Al-Sharif. At the same time, progress must also be achieved on the other tracks of the Arab-Israeli negotiations, which is a *sine qua non* for a comprehensive settlement of the Middle East question. The ultimate guarantee for a durable and just peace is Israel's withdrawal from all occupied territories, including the Syrian Golan Heights and southern Lebanon.

The global economy today is reportedly at its strongest in many years. According to the World Economic and Social Survey of 1995, it has attained an average growth in output of 3 per cent per year. But the rising tide of production has not lifted all economies. Thus, notwithstanding the promise of global recovery, over 2 billion people remain poverty-stricken, often under circumstances of extreme deprivation. Up to 18 million die annually from hunger, malnutrition and poverty-related causes. The gap between the haves and the have-nots continues to widen, doubling in size over the past three decades between the richest 20 per cent and the poorest.

Policy decisions affecting the developing countries are increasingly being made by international agencies or groups, such as the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the World Bank, the World Trade Organization (WTO) and the Group of Seven. It even seems that the United Nations itself is being marginalized, as decision-making on international economic and financial issues continues to shift to the Bretton Woods institutions, where the participation of the developing countries is less equitable. It is no secret that some countries would like to inaugurate a global system in which finance and macroeconomic management become the exclusive domain of the IMF, development strategies that of the World Bank and international trade matters that of the WTO.

I submit, however, that given the expanding role of the developing countries in the world economy and the growing interdependence between States, the participation of developing countries should be enhanced rather than curtailed. The solution of global economic problems requires a global partnership for development, and that partnership cannot be forged without sustained dialogue and cooperation on key economic issues between the developed and the developing countries. This is why, after the Jakarta summit of the Non-Aligned Movement, where economic development was restored to the top of its agenda, the Movement sought to relaunch a constructive dialogue between the North and the South

based on mutual interest, common benefit and equitably shared responsibility. That kind of dialogue has been welcomed in this Assembly, and it is our hope that other key players in the globalization process, such as non-governmental organizations, transnational corporations and international financial institutions, will in time also join that dialogue.

Just as important is the revitalization of the institutions which the United Nations Charter set in place 50 years ago to lay the social and economic foundations for peace. We must ensure, however, that in the process we will strengthen the role of the developing countries in decision-making and enhance the democratic character of the United Nations.

It is in this context that I have opposed the idea of establishing an economic security council to take the place of the Economic and Social Council, because it is bound to frustrate our efforts to democratize the functioning of the United Nations. As to the attendant suggestion to wind up the work of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) and the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO), I believe, to the contrary, that these two bodies are vital to the achievement of accelerated, sustainable and equitably spread development, especially for the developing countries. Since its establishment 30 years ago, UNCTAD has consistently endeavoured to redress the inequities and imbalances in the world economy and to give a greater voice and role to the developing countries in its management. UNIDO, too, has proven to be of concrete benefit to the developing countries, in particular in their efforts to accelerate their industrial development. Both UNCTAD and UNIDO, therefore, should be strengthened rather than be allowed to be whittled down or eliminated.

We believe that the problems now plaguing many developing countries could have been forestalled if they had adequate access to international markets, to financial resources and to appropriate technologies. And while we expect that the results of the Uruguay Round will alleviate the crisis by liberalizing the international trading system, we also know that the lion's share of the benefits will accrue to the developed countries. This imbalance is due to the significant loss of differential treatment in trade for the developing countries, the limited progress achieved in lifting restrictions on agricultural exports and the imposition of trade conditionalities based on labour codes, eco-labelling and so on. If the new trading regime is to have a positive impact on the developing countries, these problems and imbalances should be squarely addressed, and the rights and interests of the developing countries, particularly the least developed among them, should be upheld.

Amid such trends as increasing globalization, the integration of global financial markets and speculation during periods of national adjustment to privatization, the developing countries have become increasingly vulnerable. Among the developing countries, those in Africa are particularly disadvantaged because their external-debt problems have virtually excluded them from investment flows — they must rely on official development assistance (ODA), which continues to decline. At the same time, negative financial flows continue to hamper their development efforts. In 1994 alone the continent's indebtedness was double that of other developing countries. It is therefore incumbent upon the international community to give its priority attention to the critical situation in Africa.

The World Summit for Social Development, convened earlier this year in Copenhagen, underscored the determination of the international community to raise global standards of living and to address the problems of poverty, unemployment and social integration. Its Declaration and Programme of Action offer a pragmatic and feasible course to alleviate mass human suffering and to elevate the human condition. Now we must translate rhetoric into action, and realize the true potential for global prosperity.

An integral part of that process is the implementation of the Declaration and Platform for Action adopted at the Fourth World Conference on Women, recently concluded in Beijing. For only through the empowerment and advancement of women by such means as access to economic resources, to education and to the decision-making processes in all fields and at all levels can the social and economic welfare of humankind progress. It is essential, therefore, that we create an environment conducive to women's full participation in the development process, as both its agents and its beneficiaries, if we are to move forward in our efforts to achieve sustained economic growth, sustainable development and social justice.

The observance of the fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations is particularly significant to us in Indonesia, for it takes place while we celebrate the fiftieth anniversary of the proclamation of our independence. To us, this is not a mere coincidence in time but a convergence of ideals and values. Neither is it

a coincidence that the Charter of the United Nations and the Constitution of Indonesia embrace the same principles and objectives, such as independence, social justice, equality and abiding peace. For the United Nations and Indonesia emerged from the crucible of the Second World War and the struggle for independence yearning and hoping for the universal peace that can only be derived from a sharing of the fruits of freedom and justice by all humankind.

Since then, the United Nations and all of us, the peoples who are its constituents, have gone through another crucible, that of the cold war and the massive global changes that attended its wake. And, again, we have emerged with a yearning and a hope that the peace envisaged in the United Nations Charter 50 years ago will be attained in our time. The difference is that this time we have 50 years of experience to illuminate our endeavours and to sharpen our perspective of the future. On this occasion, as we rededicate ourselves to the vision of the United Nations Charter, let us resolve to use our collective experience in our continuing efforts to revitalize and strengthen the Organization that is the vehicle of our hope.

The Acting President (*interpretation from French*): I call on the Minister for Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation of Cambodia, His Excellency Mr. Ung Huot.

Mr. Ung Huot (Cambodia): First of all, I wish to extend to Mr. Freitas do Amaral and his glorious country, Portugal, my delegation's heartfelt congratulations on his election to the presidency of the fiftieth session of the United Nations General Assembly. I am certain that his leadership talent and experiences will enable us to meet the serious challenges that we face in today's quickly changing world. I wish to assure him of our full cooperation.

On behalf of the Kingdom of Cambodia, I would like to join the heads of delegation who have preceded me in the pleasant task of expressing thanks and admiration to the President of the forty-ninth session of the General Assembly, Mr. Amara Essy of Côte d'Ivoire, for the tremendous contribution he made over the course of a productive and historic year.

The Kingdom of Cambodia wishes also to thank the Secretary-General, Mr. Boutros Boutros-Ghali, for his strong and effective work, which has been so instrumental in the success of this Organization. We are all aware of the Secretary-General's great achievement in his handling of Cambodia's problem. My country is very proud of him. Cambodia now enjoys peace, freedom and democracy thanks to the representatives of all the Member States, who have contributed so much in this peace process with us. Cambodia wishes to pay special tribute to the courage of the United Nations peace-keepers who died for peace and freedom on Cambodian soil alongside thousands of other compatriots.

The Royal Government of Cambodia is working in close cooperation with the Special Representative of the Secretary-General in Cambodia, the Honourable Benny Widyono. His presence is of the utmost importance to Cambodia. He performs his duty with excellence and is highly commended by the Government and the people of Cambodia.

The Kingdom of Cambodia appreciated the work of the Honourable Justice Michael Kirby, the Secretary-General's Special Representative for Human Rights in Cambodia. Through close cooperation and regular consultations with him, and the United Nations Centre for Human Rights, steps are being taken to improve the human rights situation in the country. Cambodia, however, continues to support the presence and the work of the United Nations Centre for Human Rights. It is making valuable contributions to and recommendations for the improvement of the overall situation in Cambodia.

It is with great honour and pride that I address this fiftieth session of the General Assembly, for the first time, as the representative of the Kingdom of Cambodia. The Royal Government today, under the leadership of both the First Prime Minister, His Royal Highness Prince Norodom Ranariddh, and the Second Prime Minister, Samdech Hun Sen, is now more than two years old. It was the result of a democratic election organized and supervised by the United Nations. It is a product of the multilateral efforts of the United Nations with the close cooperation of the Cambodian people, under the wise guidance and leadership of His Majesty King Norodom Sihanouk Varman.

Through the determination of the Cambodian people, the Kingdom of Cambodia today has emerged from a long period of destruction and war, with many challenges and opportunities to build a better future. In the past two years, the Royal Government has made important progress and achieved some of the most important work in nation-building, peace-building and economic development.

After the United Nations-sponsored election in May 1993 the two main political parties combined their efforts

and formed a coalition Government, which has shown itself to be able to work closely in an efficient manner. These achievements were only possible with the support and assistance of the international community.

With peace-building, Cambodia has further consolidated sustainable peace, security and stability, which are the necessary conditions for economic development and nation-building. We have been dealing with the task of reforming the military, the police and the administration for some time now, in order to improve the public sectors so that they can serve the needs and interests of the Cambodian people and the private sector. At the same time, the Royal Government and the National Assembly are working very closely together to make Cambodia a State based on the rule of law. Cambodia is now concentrating more effort, time, energy and funds on nation-building and economic development. In this respect, Cambodia is a nation in the making.

On the economic front, Cambodia is working closely with international financial institutions, particularly the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the Asian Development Bank and the Caisse Française pour le Developpement to ensure that the process of rehabilitation and transition to a market economy is well under way. Despite some difficulties during the period immediately following the elections, progress in economic development thus far is very encouraging. According to the latest report from the IMF, dated 15 September 1995,

> "The improved financial discipline has led to an increasingly stable economic environment, as is evident in the stability of the exchange rate after the wide fluctuations of previous years."

Mr Gurirab (Namibia), Vice-President, took the Chair.

For the period from 1995 to 1997 the Kingdom of Cambodia is targeting a 7 per cent growth rate. The inflation rate was brought down from 200 per cent for the period before the election to 31 per cent in 1993 and to 18 per cent in 1994. An inflation rate of below 10 per cent has been projected for 1995. These improvements are linked to the pursuit of structural reforms in the financial sector, civil service, military and public enterprises. It is important to note here that a privatization law was adopted in December 1994, and private investments approved and formalized by the Council for the Development of Cambodia from August 1994 to May 1995 are estimated at $2.5 billion, compared to $621 million of private investment approved during the 1991 to 1993 period.

The Royal Government is pleased to inform you, Sir, and the Assembly that the National Programme to Rehabilitate and Develop Cambodia has made great progress in articulating the Government's overall and sectoral policies and programmes.

The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) First Country Programme for Cambodia for 1994-1995 has helped establish three important priorities: first, modernizing and restructuring the country; secondly, poverty alleviation and sustainable management of the environment; and, thirdly, natural resources.

In this regard, Cambodia wishes to thank the Secretary-General for his appeal for the implementation of the Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the 1990s, especially for the five main objectives: first, the lifting of the debt burden; secondly, a greater flow of finance to the least developed countries (LDCs); thirdly, a more favourable trade environment for the LDCs; fourthly, encouragement for partnership in LDCs; and, fifthly, a proper infrastructure within LDCs.

The economic and financial situation in Cambodia is evolving positively, and the performance criteria subscribed to by the Government with international organizations have been achieved. While these are good signs for improving the economic situation in Cambodia, poverty is still a major problem, particularly in rural areas, where development is moving at a slower pace. Rural development has been hampered in some parts of the country by the continuing problem of landmines. With international and bilateral assistance, the Cambodian Mine Action Centre is working towards making Cambodia a landmine-free country. It will take time, effort and support from the international community to accomplish that task.

This year the Kingdom of Cambodia has officially acceded to the Treaty of Amity and Cooperation in South-East Asia. It has become an observer member in the Association of South-East Asian Nations (ASEAN) and is now a member of the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF). Cambodia is actively engaged in improving and expanding ties with all countries throughout the world. Since 1993, with its open door policy and the policy of positive engagement, Cambodia has rejoined the community of nations and is working closely with others to promote world peace and international security. So far

the Kingdom of Cambodia has established diplomatic relations with 87 countries from all continents.

Cambodia has also taken steps towards full integration into ASEAN. As an observer member of ASEAN, Cambodia may participate in important ASEAN meetings. In December this year Cambodia will for the first time participate in the ASEAN Summit in Bangkok, Thailand. Cambodia welcomed Vietnam's full membership of ASEAN, Lao aspirations to become a full member by 1997 and Myanmar's accession to the Treaty of Amity and Cooperation in South-East Asia, to become an observer, and looks to the day when all the countries of South-East Asia form an ASEAN-10. At the same time, Cambodia welcomes the recent positive trends in the continuing development and growth of the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC). While sustainable economic development and growth are crucial for us all, it is important that development works to further enhance peace and stability for the whole world. The long-term solution being widespread economic development, Cambodia wishes to assure the Assembly of its support for the newly created World Trade Organization.

I turn to the question of world peace and international security. Cambodia is very concerned about the situation in Afghanistan. We support a peaceful settlement of the conflicts in Bosnia and Herzegovina and Somalia. Continuing war in these countries will have serious repercussions on international security.

Cambodia warmly welcomed the major agreement concluded between Israel and the Palestinians on Sunday, 24 September 1995. We support and encourage the continuing efforts of the Israeli and Palestinian people to build peace, freedom and harmony between them.

Cambodia is very happy to see that Mrs. Aung San Suu Kyi, leader of the National League for Democracy of Myanmar, was freed last July by the State Law and Order Restoration Council. We welcome this latest move by Myanmar.

We note with great concern the role of the United Nations peace-keepers. Ten years ago they numbered only 4,000, but now, as new conflicts pop up like mushrooms, their number has risen to over 70,000. A new situation has also emerged wherein the credibility of the peace-keepers is constantly being challenged. We must find a mechanism to strengthen the role of the peace-keepers and give them better support and protection against the evil forces that are out to weaken and destroy them. It is in this context that we applaud the new role assigned to the peace-keepers in Bosnia and Herzegovina. We pray for the success of the peace talks, led by the distinguished American diplomat Richard Holbrooke, between Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina and the Bosnian Serbs.

The subject of the United Nations Conference on Women, held in Beijing this year, was very timely. Since the formation of the Provisional Government in June 1993, Cambodia has been conscious of the rights of women. Cambodia now has in the Government a National Secretariat for Women's Affairs, which promotes greater recognition of the roles of women in society. The Royal Government sent a delegation of women, headed by Her Royal Highness Princess Marie Norodom Ranariddh, to Beijing.

With regard to nuclear testing, as a Party to the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), Cambodia strongly supports a ban on all nuclear testing around the world. As we nave just concluded the 1995 Review and Extension Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, nuclear tests anywhere, whether atmospheric or underground, are of major concern for all of us in terms of the health, safety and well-being of humankind. The Kingdom of Cambodia notes with satisfaction that progress is being made on the comprehensive test-ban treaty, and we applaud the agreement that has been reached on the mandate with regard to the production of fissile materials for weapons. We are very happy to see the encouraging sign from the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) in augmenting application of the NPT's safeguards provisions.

As one of the founding members of the Non-Aligned Movement, Cambodia looks forward with great enthusiasm to participating in the ninth Summit Conference of Heads of State or Government of Non-Aligned Countries, to be held this year in Cartagena de Indias, Colombia.

We applaud the professional skill and chairmanship of His Excellency President Soeharto of the Republic of Indonesia during the last three years, as leader of the Non-Aligned Movement.

Cambodia is very happy to welcome the next Chairman of our Movement, His Excellency President Ernesto Samper, President of the Republic of Colombia. My delegation wishes to assure him that he will receive the fullest cooperation from Cambodia. We are convinced

that he will, in a very spirited way, keep our Movement in the international agenda spotlight.

As we celebrate the fiftieth anniversary of this important Organization, an Organization that we should all be proud of, Cambodia calls for the strengthening and enhancement of the role of the United Nations, and urges that we move towards global peace-building and harmony. Remember that our Organization was built on the very idea of preventing and ending all conflicts and sufferings, and remember also that this same idea was made possible in the case of Cambodia. Cambodia, I am very proud to say, is one of the success stories of our Organization.

The Acting President: I now call on the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Andorra, His Excellency Mr. Manuel Mas Ribó.

Mr. Mas Ribó (Andorra) *(spoke in Catalan; interpretation from French text furnished by the delegation)*: It is only right to begin by thanking the outgoing President, Minister Amara Essy, who has done so much for our Organization during the past year, and by congratulating the incoming President, Mr. Diogo Freitas do Amaral. On behalf of the people and the Government of Andorra, I wish him every success and good fortune in his important task. I have no doubt that this distinguished personality from the Iberian peninsula, for whom I have great respect and fraternal esteem, will take the helm of this Assembly with a firm hand.

For the last 50 years Heads of State, Heads of Government, Ministers and Ambassadors have been coming before this General Assembly of the United Nations to set out, with hope and with passion, their desire for world peace and the development of our planet. Year after year dignitaries from all corners of the globe have met in New York to reiterate the ideals conceived in San Francisco five decades ago. It is thus an honour and a privilege for me to do the same today, as Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Principality of Andorra, a very old and very small nation, a State that is the fruit of 700 years of peace and independence.

The celebration of anniversaries allows people to pause briefly to look back on their past, to reflect, to draw conclusions and to try to better prepare their future. Fifty years after the horrors of the Second World War, "We the peoples of the United Nations" now have the task of reaffirming the importance of our Organization by consolidating its founding principles and giving impetus to the reform of the United Nations so as to make it a modern, efficient instrument for the new international order that has arisen since the end of the cold war.

The founding principles of the United Nations could be summed up as follows: equality of States, tolerance, the peaceful settlement of disputes and the promotion of development.

The principle of the equality of States is dear to all small States. The preamble to the Charter of the United Nations refers to all nations, large and small. In the General Assembly each State has one vote.

A sovereign State is not only a group — whatever its size — of people; it is a history, a language, the will of a people, a sense of independence — in a word, a community of human beings. Some States, like ours, Andorra, have only 60,000 inhabitants. Others have more than a billion. But all have the right to speak and vote at the United Nations. And, just as peace comes into being when the powerful respect the small, the rule of law becomes reality in international affairs when all are treated as equals and when parties can solve their differences at the negotiating table, not on the field of devastation that results from the use of force.

Last year, the Head of Government of Andorra stressed from this very rostrum that by their very nature, small States intrinsically and essentially maintain the values of respect for diversity and of peaceful coexistence. To create a world balanced by the rule of law in a world of instincts, exchanges must be based on the principle of equality between States.

Nevertheless, the principle of equality should not be reduced to the formula "one State, one vote". The principle of equality springs from the desire to understand the other, to allow diversity and to exchange different visions of humankind and society. The principle of equality derives from the concept of tolerance. In this International Year of Tolerance, we must be particularly aware of the central position of this idea. The United Nations cannot exist without tolerance. It would surely be absurd to meet in this Assembly if all that were to come out of it was the prevention and outlawing of the opinions of others. Though it is sometimes considered less heroic than force, diplomacy is the supreme instrument we have in this forum, an instrument for respect and understanding.

We in Andorra have resorted to diplomacy from historical necessity from very early times; these 700

years of peace of which we are so proud are probably the result. We have also had to be tolerant and to respect others because, during the numerous conflicts that have shaken the European continent over the centuries, we have sheltered on our territory those in search of asylum, from whichever side they came. We have learned, I repeat, of necessity, being weak and humble like all small States, how to differ without imposing ourselves.

Let us give tolerance the importance it deserves as a founding principle of the United Nations. But tolerance does not mean *laissez faire*. Just as John Stuart Mill set the limits of individual freedom at the point at which that freedom infringed on the liberty of others, tolerance is limited only by intolerance. The United Nations has the power to say "no" to those States and peoples who do not respect the religious, political, moral and artistic convictions of others; "no" to those States and peoples who do not respect minorities, be they national or of any other kind, and their languages, which are an essential element of cultural transmission; "no", above all, when repression is accompanied by the use of force and by cruelty, torture and other unspeakable acts. That is why, since joining the United Nations, my country has attached such importance to the Third Committee of the General Assembly and to questions of human rights. Last year, Andorra took an active part in the debate on capital punishment, applying the constitutional ideas approved by its people, which loves life and believes in it.

The United Nations was not built in a vacuum of values -- quite the contrary. When, in June 1945, the right words were being sought in San Francisco for the United Nations Charter, those that were found were based on a very clear vision of the dignity of the human being with a universal vocation. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights, adopted by the United Nations on 10 December 1948, made clear once and for all what was, is and will be acceptable and desirable, and what is not, in order that the inalienable dignity of every human being should be respected and the limits of tolerance demarcated by defining what we consider to be intolerable.

For instance, we find intolerable the ethnic and religious intolerance that leads to disasters like those which the horror-struck international community has been obliged to witness in the territories that were once part of Yugoslavia. To face up to these challenges, the United Nations has made a considerable effort in recent years to carry out large-scale operations to keep the peace. The Secretary-General, Mr. Boutros Boutros-Ghali, informed us on 3 January this year in his supplement to "An Agenda for Peace" of the considerable increase in the deployment of military personnel since 1988. On 31 January of that year, 9,570 "blue helmets" were engaged in peace-keeping operations; as at 16 December last year, there were 73,393.

The near non-use of the veto in the Security Council since the end of the cold war has encouraged this growth in deployment. Very often, unfortunately, we hear so much talk of the failures of United Nations operations that we forget to mention the successes. When we now celebrate the fiftieth anniversary of the Organization, we should proclaim it aloud: the role of the United Nations has been essential, and the results are highly positive. Let us not ask the United Nations to do what the Organization cannot do, and has no vocation to do, making it the target of criticisms better levelled at the paralysis of Member States. The United Nations is and will be what the Member States wish it to be, neither more nor less, and without miracles.

The complexity of the conflicts now afflicting the world, as the Secretary-General has on several occasions pointed out, lies in the fact that most of them are conflicts within the borders of States, or former States. This makes them more complicated than the conflicts we were accustomed to during the years of the cold war, mainly because in many cases the target for destruction is the civilian population, and secondly because the task of the humanitarian organizations and the soldiers sent to keep the peace is not respected by the parties to the conflict, which consider them as abetting the enemy.

The action for peace taken by the United Nations, an Organization founded on the ruins of a ferocious war, must be constant. It is our imperative duty to eliminate war and to cut off conflicts at the root. We all know the recommendations listed by the Secretary-General in his "An Agenda for Peace", so I shall not repeat them. But I will underline the importance in the opinion of my Government of preventive diplomacy. Precisely because Andorra came into being as a result of a peace agreement signed in 1278, which made our territory completely neutral and which called for the destruction of all castles and warlike fortifications, we can well understand the possibility of stopping conflicts in time by means of peace agreements that neutralize the power to harm of the contenders by removing both parties' access to armaments.

But the United Nations and we, its Members, must have the courage to act when the first signs of a conflict

lead us to suspect its existence. The world today needs an international authority to facilitate dialogue, to suggest compromises acceptable to the parties to the conflict — above all, when the conflict is in its initial stages — and to confirm the agreements reached by negotiation. The United Nations has demonstrated that it is such an institution, and it would be unjust not to recognize this great merit during this anniversary. Let us imagine a world without the United Nations, where force predominated over law, where there were no standard universal values for which to strive, where the human community, which is capable of the highest and most noble acts, fell into a vortex of egoism, war and destruction. The United Nations is not optional in this world of interdependent States, but indispensable.

Please allow me at this stage to evaluate the relevance of Andorra's modern development in this regard. As I have said, Andorra is a land of peace, welcome and friendship. During the more than 700 years of its existence with its own national identity, particularly in this century, when wars have shaken our neighbour States and Europe, Andorra has been a place of refuge, of asylum and of peaceful coexistence. It is precisely now, when 50 years have passed since the founding of the United Nations as a result of the events of that tragic phase in human history, and when we must still regret that irrationality is sowing death and cruelty in many places throughout the world, that we would like to recall, humbly, but with a firmness informed by the realities of our history, the deep and sincere conviction that Andorra can bring to the world. There can be no difficulty in peaceful coexistence if there is good will and understanding. There can be no infringement of tolerance if there is respect for people and ideas. In a word, magnanimity and indulgence will always be more effective than ignominy and opprobrium.

From Andorra we proclaim peace; we call for it and, if necessary, we demand it as a universal possession that no one has the right to change or to violate. When there is serious aggression against nature and the environment, when materialism and speculation seek to obliterate humanism and sensitivity, when the hypocrisy of interests overcomes the reality of ideals, a generous-spirited common effort must be made to find the path of peace and coexistence.

The Andorran Constitution enshrines respect for and the promotion of freedom, equality, justice and tolerance, and the defence of human rights and individual dignity. With that background, we forcefully insist before the General Assembly that the primary purpose of mankind is to achieve peace, without reservation and without ulterior motive. None of us here can be satisfied with the results until one day we can announce the great news that peace reigns on Earth. The near-universality of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, the spirit of which Andorra has always respected, is a positive example of that common task. It thus gives me pleasure today to announce that the Government of Andorra has submitted the Treaty to its Parliament for ratification.

Peace must be promoted. By every possible means, especially through education, we must spread the word everywhere that only tolerance, common sense, understanding, good will, solidarity, respect for cultural diversity with its intellectual and spiritual stimulation, variety and the struggle for social progress and brotherhood can lead to peace and can provide pride and dignity to all human beings while eliminating intransigence and racial, religious, social and political hatred, which are at the root of all conflicts between peoples and civilizations.

There must be an end to the horrors and atrocities of the wars that continue to take place in our civilized world amid alarming indifference. These threats affect us all; we must find the means to prevent violence against society and against individuals. It is not enough to cry out in compassion or frustration, or to make the excuse that we are the victims of modern times, as Anthony Burgess put it in his novel *A Clockwork Orange*. There must be determination if we are to be able to say that we all have a future. There must be serious, unhesitating commitment on the part of those bearing the heaviest responsibility, particularly with respect to the economic consequences, which are in fact predominant in causing certain scandalous situations and in keeping them alive. We must act with morality if we are to be able to face repeated aggression against human rights. It would be wonderful if we could all make an unstinting effort to emerge from the shadows and if, with one voice, we could set up the machinery that would make peace triumph forever, and could understand — in the words of François Mitterrand, former President of the French Republic and therefore former Co-Prince of Andorra — that "awareness of injustice is not enough to combat injustice".

As we strive towards peace let us always remember that we can never reach the development goals set by Mr. Boutros Boutros-Ghali in his "An Agenda for Development" without reducing the warlike and military activities of the poorest countries. Let us face the facts: development makes for peace, but without peace, without eliminating unnecessary spending on military equipment,

without agreement among Governments that rightly demand a better future for their citizens, there will be no development.

But this must not mean a relaxation of the development efforts that Member States and the Organization itself have always promoted. Day after day in the field, the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) and the World Health Organization (WHO) carry out work that is far too important not to enjoy our sincere support. I take this opportunity to announce that during my stay in New York I signed, on behalf of the Government of Andorra, the Convention on the Rights of the Child, which reflects my country's recognition of the cause promoted by that great text. Men and women like the late James Grant — who at UNICEF carried out such tasks and contributed to the well-being of so many children throughout the world — demonstrate the productive vitality of the United Nations.

We in Andorra are much concerned with questions of development. Despite our modest means and small territory, we feel solidarity with victims of malnutrition, hunger, sickness and the lack of educational opportunities. Our foreign policy at the United Nations has been oriented in that direction. Last March, the Andorran Head of Government brought to Copenhagen a message of solidarity, and declared that poverty was not inevitable. Andorra is a small State; we are therefore convinced that, apart from the importance of large programmes and their inevitable macro-amplitudes, social development is a more accessible goal when it is approached on a small scale, at the level of the community or indeed of the family.

Hence, the Declaration of the World Summit for Social Development includes a commitment proposed by Andorra, which we shall invoke in our work in the Assembly's Main Committees. This commitment urges us to

> "Acknowledge and encourage the contribution of people of all age groups as equally and vitally important for the building of a harmonious society, and foster dialogue between generations in all parts of society". (*A/CONF.166/9, para. 29, commitment 4 (h)*)

Human beings, happily, are living longer, and their numbers are growing. We must find new ways to guarantee the balance of the social contract between generations, and make social integration — one of the pillars of development — work. To that end, we need to devote special attention to the problems of unemployment and the social integration of young people, particularly this year as we mark the tenth anniversary of International Youth Year. I have instructed our Permanent Representative to the United Nations to devote time and resources to initiating a dialogue with his counterparts on the question of youth.

We have recently seen how three great conferences — those of Cairo, Copenhagen and Beijing — focused the attention of the international community. Cairo addressed problems of population, Copenhagen those of poverty and social development, and Beijing the question of women. It is vital that the conclusions of these high-level meetings not become a dead letter; all Member States must assess their results and consider their concrete applications, both at home and throughout the world. But Cairo, Copenhagen and Beijing must not overshadow other similar conferences. I am thinking of Rio de Janeiro and its impact on environmental policy. A country of the Pyrenees, like Andorra, cannot shirk its environmental responsibilities; that is why the office of Andorra's Secretary-General for the environment has drawn up valuable initiatives to protect our ecosystem, our flora and fauna, our waters and the air we breathe.

In this statement I have tried to recall the founding principles that inspire the United Nations, and the great themes on which the General Assembly will reflect over the coming decades. Clearly, not everything has been perfect during the past 50 years; there have been situations where we Member States have not been effective enough. Every day, we hear about hunger, disease and lack of access to education, which affect the poor more often than the rich. But now, on this anniversary, let us take comfort from the work that has been achieved. As I said before, let us consider what the world would be without the United Nations.

None the less, on the eve of the third millennium, when interdependence among the Earth's peoples is stronger than ever, we need the United Nations to be increasingly nimble and flexible, able to process information quickly and to react rapidly to any crisis. Many reforms are needed: reform of the Security Council, now under debate, and that of the Economic and Social Council, which may take place in the future, will not be the last. We also need more effective methods for allocating resources and for evaluating the needs of each department to avoid duplication of labour. The Secretary-

General has mentioned this on several occasions, and I have no doubt that, given good will, we shall succeed.

The Principality of Andorra — in the words of our Head of Government — is a very old nation and a very young State. We are a newcomer to the United Nations — the 184th Member. Nevertheless, it is to the United Nations that we have set up our first diplomatic mission. Our first Permanent Representative, who during the next two years will be in charge of opening our Mission and starting its activities, presented his credentials to the Secretary-General just over a week ago. With the humility of a newcomer, but with the joy and energy of the convinced, we are making progress in our task of participating in the work of the Organization.

I should like, on behalf of the people and Government of Andorra, to affirm our support for the United Nations. We wish it long life and much success in its struggle for tolerance, peace and development, for the benefit of the world and of generations to come. And we express our hope that humankind will guard those values that will allow us all to face the challenges of the future — love, brotherhood and friendship.

Let me end this statement by quoting Robert Kennedy:

(*spoke in English*)

> "It is from numberless diverse acts of courage and belief that human history is shaped. Each time a man stands up for an ideal or acts to improve the lot of others, or strikes out against injustice, he sends forth a tiny ripple of hope, and, crossing each other from a million different centres of energy and daring, those ripples build a current that can sweep down the mightiest walls of oppression and resistance."

The Acting President: The next speaker is the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Bahrain, Sheikh Mohammed Bin Mubarak Al-Khalifa, on whom I call.

Mr. Al-Khalifa (Bahrain) (*interpretation from Arabic*): At the outset I have pleasure in extending to Mr. Diogo Freitas do Amaral and to his friendly country, Portugal, my sincere congratulations on his election as President of the General Assembly for this session, which marks the fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations, when the Organization is celebrating its golden jubilee. In wishing Mr. Freitas do Amaral success in conducting the proceedings of this session, I assure him of my delegation's readiness to cooperate fully with him towards achieving the desired objectives.

I should like also to take this opportunity to express my thanks and appreciation to Mr. Freitas do Amaral's predecessor, Mr. Amara Essy, for his dedicated and sincere efforts in guiding the proceedings of the last session.

It is also a pleasure to express my deep appreciation to the Secretary-General, Mr. Boutros Boutros-Ghali, for his tireless efforts to enhance the international Organization's standing and role and to enable it to carry out its great responsibilities and tasks.

The United Nations was established 50 years ago with the purpose of becoming the effective means of saving humanity from the scourge of war which had plagued the century. The Organization was also designed to serve as a mechanism aimed at developing a new international order based on justice and equality for all and the promotion of human and cultural interaction amongst the world's various peoples in the framework of a secure international community.

States and peoples, in their desire for security, stability and cooperation, supported the principles enshrined in the Charter, including those which call for ensuring the sovereign equality of and mutual respect between States, refraining from the threat or use of force, entrenching the principles of settling disputes by peaceful means, respecting every State's territorial integrity, and refraining from interfering in the internal affairs of others.

Guided by these principles, the United Nations has achieved numerous accomplishments at the political, economic and social levels. Many nations and peoples, with the support of the United Nations, have been able to achieve political independence, attain their legitimate rights and implement development programmes.

The 50 year experience of the United Nations embodies profound indications of the future of a changing world in which the enormous interacting developments have not yet reached the limit. The most prominent among those signs is, perhaps, the end of the era of confrontation between East and West at a time when the human race is on the threshold of a new century. The profound significance of these developments is that the prevailing political climate has given rise to a situation that favours the correcting of certain trends in

international relations and their development in a manner that takes into account the new circumstances and changes in several regions of the world.

In the context of these historical premises, world Powers have been concerned that changes might lead them to proceed in disparate directions which, it was feared, would make it difficult for the international community to check the unrestrained pace of the changes so engendered and control their effects on world peace and security. Thus it becomes essential to develop a balancing strategy for joint international action, especially now that interdependence and multilateralism must form the basis of cooperation in international relations.

This political reality was given expression on 31 January 1992, when the Security Council — for the first time — held a meeting at the level of Heads of State and Government. The Council then requested the Secretary-General to prepare a report containing analyses and recommendations concerning ways of enhancing and strengthening the capabilities of the United Nations in the areas of preventive diplomacy, peacemaking and peace-keeping. Recently, on the occasion of the fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations, the Secretary-General has submitted the important "Supplement to 'An Agenda for Peace'", in which he set out his views and thoughts as a contribution to the continuous drive to enhance the Organization's capability to face up to threats to international peace and security.

The significance of this new tendency was underscored during the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, held in Rio de Janeiro in 1992 and its Rio Declaration on Environment and Development, Agenda 21 as well as in many other important international conventions relating to development and the environment. It was further confirmed during the International Conference on Population and Development, held in Cairo last year. Both the World Summit for Social Development, held in Copenhagen, and the Fourth World Conference on Women, held recently in Beijing, confirmed the principle of interdependence and recognized its importance.

These world conferences and meetings have made the United Nations a global forum for the international politics of multilateralism. Efforts are now being directed towards addressing the problems of the future, such as environmental pollution and population explosion, in addition to economic and social crises and other dilemmas of a universal character.

This increasing tendency to act in accordance with the principles of interdependence and multilateralism is undoubtedly a positive one that is in consonance with the purposes of the Charter. However, certain aspects of the current international situation raise a number of fundamental questions concerning the role of the United Nations and its influence on the current developments on the international scene which serve as pointers to the shape of future relations between States.

Such questioning includes, for example: How will the Organization steer a course amid the new features of the modern political topography which is changing due to incessant strategic changes of international policies? How will the major Powers identify the role of the United Nations in the area of interdependence and international multilateralism? And how will they deal with crises in areas of high tension around the world?

It is obvious that such questioning has to do, in essence, with two fundamental issues. The first is the future of collective security, as envisioned in the Charter, for the remaining part of this century and during the next century. The second is the mechanism for international economic and social cooperation to which the major industrial States will agree.

A search into the legacy of the United Nations during half a century leads us to say that these two issues will constitute the major characteristics of international relations in the twenty-first century. The problem of the *realpolitik* policies pursued by the Powers that influence the formulation of international relations is that they do not seem to be in harmony with the principle of collective security. The problem of international economic and social cooperation lies in the fact that the concepts of economic and social development held by the wealthy industrialized countries are at variance with those of the developing countries *vis-à-vis* the economic and social aspects of development issues. In our view, this difference of outlook creates obstacles that not only impede the implementation and development of international cooperation but also affect the manner in which economic and social problems are dealt with.

The two issues of collective security and international economic and social cooperation should be accorded an increasing importance since they embody the solid foundation of stability and progress in a world that is in a state of flux. The need to attach such importance to those two issues arises from the fact that, for over 50 years, the international community has not been able to

reach consensus on how to put into practice the principle of collective security in line with the vision of the Charter. In so far as international economic and social cooperation is concerned, the North-South dialogue has not led to any positive result in over three decades.

Given this fact, the world has to evolve new perceptions on how to address the issues of collective security and international economic and social cooperation in the context of a practical perspective that takes into account the new changes that have taken place in the world.

In our view, it is possible, once the international community musters the necessary political will, to put into practice important aspects of the principle of collective security along the following lines:

The creation of a mechanism that meets on a regular basis within the framework of the Security Council to monitor and detect threats to world peace and security.

The development and better use of the mechanisms of preventive diplomacy in preventing, containing or pre-empting conflicts before they develop into serious hostilities.

The development, in all seriousness, of the ideas and concepts embodied in Chapter VII of the Charter, in the light of the international community's experience, to become the basis of dealing with aggression as it arises.

The utilization of the capabilities of regional organizations in the context of United Nations cooperation with such organizations in the maintenance of world peace and security.

As regards international economic and social cooperation, this too requires the existence of the political will, especially on the part of the wealthy industrialized countries, to create an equitable global economic environment that may contribute to the achievement of stability and prosperity for all States and peoples.

We believe that the gap which exists, in the areas of economic growth and social advancement, between the wealthy industrialized countries, with their enormous economic resources, and the developing countries, is among the most chronic and significant problems that face the international community.

Regrettably, the commitments to implement the development policies and strategies agreed upon in the United Nations with a view to narrowing that gap have not been honoured. It goes without saying that the United Nations will not be able to discharge its mandate in an environment fraught with disparities, because the poverty, unemployment and lack of productive employment that are rampant throughout the world are negative factors in the area of development. Proceeding from its awareness of this reality, the United Nations has convened the World Summit on Social Development in Copenhagen to address the urgent and serious issues of social development that face mankind. We believe that the implementation of the policies set out in the Summit's Declaration and Programme of Action should take place within the context of the religious principles, national legislation, customs and traditions of every State.

It is essential at this stage to reopen the dialogue within the United Nations system between developed and developing countries concerning all development matters, on the basis of the commitments set out in the Declaration on International Economic Cooperation and the International Development Strategy for the Fourth United Nations Development Decade. To that end, a new and practical development plan has to be adopted with a view to ensuring compliance with the decisions of the various United Nations development conferences, so that the desired objectives of those decisions may be achieved.

We are convinced that international cooperation could be enhanced and strengthened through the adoption of policies leading to the activation of the United Nations role in the area of economic and social cooperation by means of addressing such world problems as development and environment. Also, world trade mechanisms should be developed in accordance with the common interests of States and in an equitable manner that takes into account the requirements of development and the economic problems of the developing countries, accords due attention to the socio-political aspects of the economic problems that beset those countries and aims at consolidating the foundations of their economic security.

Notwithstanding its accomplishments, on the one hand, and, on the other, the obstacles and failures it has encountered for reasons beyond its control, the United Nations now finds itself facing a new challenge. This new challenge forces it to deal with crises and problems caused by ethnic, national and even religious and cultural conflicts and clashes between parties that belonged to

States and territories which had originally been unified in accordance with agreements reached in the wake of this century's wars.

In view of the tense regional and international atmosphere caused by the eruption of those heretofore dormant volcanoes and the ensuing changes brought about by such eruption, it has become essential to enhance the role of the United Nations and provide it with the necessary means of dealing effectively with such crises and resolving them before they develop into devastating wars between the sons of this or that country such as those we now witness in Afghanistan, Somalia, the Balkans and other parts of the world where peoples are suffering destruction and destitution.

In addition to the new issues that the United Nations now faces in the wake of the cold war, there is a host of regional and international questions that continue to be cause for concern and require the attention of our Organization. Top of the list is the situation in the Gulf region which, in the recent past, witnessed two destructive wars whose consequences continue to affect adversely the region's political and economic conditions and to jeopardize its security and stability. Proceeding from our eagerness to preserve security and stability in this vital region of the world, we call upon all parties to pay heed to its importance as an area where international interests criss-cross and as an area of strategic importance to world trade.

In the light of these facts, we stress the need for Iraq to comply with Security Council resolutions concerning the State of Kuwait and the release of Kuwaiti and other prisoners of war and detainees. While we call upon Iraq to respond fully to the behests of international legality, we must voice our concern over the territorial integrity, sovereignty and unity of Iraq which must be preserved and express sympathy with the brotherly Iraqi people who endure difficult economic and social conditions that should end once their causes cease to exist.

The persistence of the dispute between the United Arab Emirates and the Islamic Republic of Iran over the question of sovereignty over the islands of Abu Mousa, Greater Tunb and Lesser Tunb is regrettable in view of its adverse effects on the Gulf region's security and stability.

Consequently, Bahrain calls upon the Islamic Republic of Iran to respond to the United Arab Emirates call to seek a solution to the question of the islands through serious bilateral talks, or by any of the other peaceful means that are available for the settlement of disputes between States by mutual consent.

The Middle East has embarked on a new historical phase wherein optimism holds sway with the adoption of the principle of negotiation and respect for law as a means to settle disputes between States instead of war, violence and occupation of territories by force. The peace process in the Middle East has taken significant steps since the historic Washington meeting 13 September 1993, which resulted in the signing of the Agreement on Principles between the Palestinians and Israel. It was followed by the signing of the Peace Treaty between Jordan and Israel on 26 October 1994 and the signing of the second phase of the Agreement of Principles on the expansion of Palestinian self-rule between the Palestinians and Israel in Washington on 28 September 1995. The sparkle of optimism that has glittered on the horizon should not be allowed to die out as a result of the Israeli settlement policies that aim at changing the demography of the occupied Arab territories, particularly Al-Quds, in order to create a new reality.

Bahrain welcomes these steps and reaffirms its support for the Middle East peace process. It also supports the endeavours and efforts that aim at reaching a just, comprehensive and durable solution based on the principle of land for peace as well as Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973). Proceeding from this, Bahrain reaffirms its support for the position taken by the Syrian Arab Republic regarding the restoration of its full sovereignty over its territories in the Syrian Golan that has been occupied since 1967. It is also important that the peace process should be reactivated on the Lebanese track and that Israel should be compelled to comply with Security Council resolution 425 (1978). For if peace is to prevail, it should include all parties without exception.

We appeal to all the parties involved in the dispute in Somalia to allow the creation of a secure climate that is conducive to the continuation of political efforts and humanitarian activities. Such continuation depends on the cooperation of those parties and on their adherence to the principle of dialogue and understanding in order to achieve a political settlement that would ensure the restoration of peace, security and stability to this sister nation.

The State of Bahrain has, from the beginning, followed with utmost attention and deepest concern the situation in Bosnia and Herzegovina, along with all the

human tragedies and injustices resulting from the policies of aggression and criminal acts, including killings, deportations and ethnic cleansing, committed by the Serb aggressors against the people of Bosnia. The crisis has taken several turns and twists and has been accompanied by political moves by regional and international parties that have almost deprived the international community of credibility.

Bahrain has supported all United Nations resolutions relating to Bosnia and Herzegovina. It has endorsed all the efforts and initiatives undertaken by the United Nations, as well as other organizations and all those who desire peace and uphold justice.

As the Serbs have gone too far in their aggression and in defying the will of the international community in pursuit of their expansionist and aggressive schemes that have been exposed to all and rejected by all, we see a ray of light on the horizon which gives cause for hope that, at long last, a solution for this human tragedy may be at hand and might finally redeem the international community's silence over the plight of the Bosnian people.

Bahrain supports the positive developments that are taking place now in Bosnia and Herzegovina. It calls upon the international community and the Security Council to maintain pressure on the Serb aggressors towards compliance with United Nations resolutions and accepting a just and equitable solution for all parties. In particular, the solution should be just and equitable for the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina, whose people have suffered material losses and have been subjected to inhuman suffering as a result of the occupation of parts of their territories.

While we voice deep concern over the ongoing conflict in Afghanistan, we should like to call upon the parties involved in the conflict to resort to reason and logic and, thereby, reach a cease-fire and work for peace, stability and national reconciliation.

The United Nations has deployed continuous efforts over the past few years towards the settlement of the Cyprus problem. In this connection, we should like to reiterate our support for the efforts of the Secretary-General that aim at reaching a just resolution of the problem in accordance with the provisions of the relevant Security Council resolutions.

Bahrain, having supported the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) and the objectives thereof,is of the opinion that the Treaty, being an instrument of international peace and security, should apply universally with no exceptions or special considerations. We should like, meanwhile, to stress the need for upholding the Treaty, adherence to its provisions and pursuit of its objectives. Bahrain views Security Council resolution 984 (1995), despite the limited nature of the guarantees it embodies, as a first positive step towards security guarantees that are applicable to all, for States which do not possess nuclear weapons.

Bahrain supported the initiative of making the Middle East a zone free of nuclear and other weapons of mass destruction on the basis of its belief in the importance of peace, security and confidence building amongst all States of the region. It has also endorsed the resolution adopted by the conference of the parties to the NPT and the arms limitations Treaty, despite its shortcomings. We are confident that a Middle East zone free of nuclear and weapons of mass destruction would enhance the peace process and lead to a situation wherein enormous financial resources would be saved and channelled towards the economic prosperity and social development of the peoples of the region.

Regional cooperation has become one of the necessities of our modern world in view of the intertwined interests of the peoples of the world. It is thus a complementary part of, rather than a substitute for international cooperation. It serves today as an effective means for the promotion of economic prosperity and mutual understanding with a view to establishing strong relations based on mutual trust, good-neighbourliness and non-interference in the internal affairs of others.

The Arab Gulf States have long recognized the importance of regional cooperation amongst them in enabling them to face the imminent risks that beset the region. More than 15 years ago, they established the Gulf Cooperation Council with a view to reinvigorating Gulf joint action and strengthening the historical and brotherly ties between the Gulf States on the basis of the unity of objectives and a common destiny. The Council's march has witnessed positive developments in the fields of coordination and cooperation amongst its member States. The resolutions of the fifteenth summit which Bahrain had the honour of hosting and presiding over have strengthened this march. The summit had historic significance in that it addressed crucial Gulf issues by adopting resolutions that reaffirmed the determination to widen the scope of cooperation, to surmount obstacles and to settle all outstanding matters within the Council

and the unified Gulf family. Brotherly and friendly States have welcomed these steps and expressed the hope that the same spirit would apply to all issues so that all the States and peoples of the region may reap the benefits of security, stability and prosperity.

The Governments of the States members of the Council have undertaken to continue to promote all aspects of cooperation between their States and with other economic groups, to look forward positively to the prospects of future work and to develop strategic visions that take into consideration the interests and priorities of the other members of the Council and those of other States in the interests of peace, security and stability in the region and in the world at large.

The strengthening of the United Nations role and increasing its capabilities and effectiveness require the developing of its bodies, including the Security Council, the organ concerned with international peace and security. The need to develop the work of the Council has become an important issue that has the unanimous support of Member States in view of the current international changes. We believe that such development should reflect the equitable geographic representation of all regional groups in order to increase the effectiveness and level of efficiency of the Organization and to achieve balance in the Council, so that its membership may be representative of the world's different cultures. As member of this international Organization, Bahrain looks forward to participating in the work of the Council during the period of its membership scheduled for 1998-1999.

We all aspire after a world of security, cooperation and peace. Our international Organization, equipped as it is with its membership's intellectual and cultural values and with the high principles and noble objectives enshrined in its Charter, is quite capable of satisfying this aspiration. However, in order for the United Nations to do so, we, its Members, must give the Organization our full support on the occasion of its fiftieth anniversary so that it may achieve in our behalf what we all desire, namely, justice and peace.

The Acting President: I now call on the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Sri Lanka, His Excellency the Honourable Lakshman Kadirgamar.

Mr. Kadirgamar (Sri Lanka): Let me at the outset extend to Mr. Freitas do Amaral of Portugal the sincere good wishes of the Government and people of Sri Lanka on his election to the presidency of the General Assembly at this its historic fiftieth session. We are privileged to have him guide its deliberations. My delegation offers him the same full cooperation that we extended to all his predecessors in that high office.

Our gratitude is due Mr. Amara Essy of Côte d'Ivoire, who presided over the forty-ninth session with great skill and wisdom.

When I addressed the Assembly last year, I reported that the people of Sri Lanka had secured an electoral victory for

> "moderation, tolerance and unity" (*Official Records of the General Assembly, Forty-ninth Session, Plenary Meetings, 5th meeting, p. 23*)

in a society that had passed through harrowing times. I detailed the initiatives taken by the Government of President Chandrika Bandaranaike Kumaratunga, supported by a number of political parties, including those of the two principal minority communities, to resolve outstanding ethnic and other disputes through a bold process of political negotiation. That process was launched, but later encountered set-backs, primarily because one of the groups with which the Government had commenced talks abruptly returned to violence and terrorism, rejecting the peaceful option to which the rest of the country is committed. The Government has been constrained to take unavoidable reactive military measures to safeguard the lives, the security and the welfare of those who are threatened by the terrorist group. So long as they aim at our leaders the threat of assassination, we cannot believe that their professions of peace are sincere.

We continue to fulfil our obligations to all our citizens, including those trapped in the north of the country. Supplies of food and other essential requirements are being made available by the Government and delivered through the International Committee of the Red Cross to our citizens in affected areas. This is an exceptional exercise which the late James Grant of the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) described as uniquely humanitarian in a conflict situation.

We are deeply troubled and concerned about the situation in which the children of the north and east of our country are placed. That mankind owes to the child the best it has to give is universally accepted. Yet we are appalled that in their desperation the militants, spurning

the entreaties of distraught parents, have descended to conscripting children as young in age as 10 years to wage war and have even assigned them to suicide missions. A recent military encounter in north-eastern Sri Lanka revealed grim evidence confirming our worst fears. Most of the lives sacrificed by the leadership of the militants were teenagers barely able to carry arms, let alone understand the twisted mono-ethnic separatist ideology they have been indoctrinated to defend. In truth, it is the militants who must bear the ultimate responsibility for civilian casualties in this conflict. One of the challenges of peace that Sri Lanka will soon have to face is the need to overcome the terrible legacy of the subverted and distorted young minds, of the broken, bereft families and interrupted lives that the conflict will leave behind.

All this has only increased my Government's determination to fulfil an imperative mandate from the people, to rebuild a free society in our Republic which is based on tolerance and understanding and in which all communities throughout the nation could live in harmony and dignity in accordance with the principles of democratic governance. The Government has accordingly presented comprehensive proposals, daring in their scope and reach, for the devolution of power to regional units. True to our long-established democratic tradition, a free-ranging national debate among Sri Lankans is proceeding on these proposals. The eventual implementation of agreed proposals will require compliance with the procedures appropriate for the amendment of our Constitution, including a two-thirds majority in Parliament and a national referendum.

To help further enhance conditions of confidence for the observance of human rights and fundamental freedoms, my Government has presented legislation in Parliament to establish a Human Rights Commission in Sri Lanka. The Commission will consist of members chosen from among persons with knowledge and experience in the field of human rights. They will be appointed on the recommendation of a Constitutional Council — an independent and widely representative body reflecting all shades of political opinion. The proposed Commission will have monitoring functions in respect of executive and administrative practices as well as investigative functions to inquire into any infringement of fundamental rights. It will also have advisory and other functions, *inter alia*, to ensure that laws and administrative practices accord with international human-rights norms and standards and to facilitate inexpensive access to remedial relief. Sri Lanka has consistently supported United Nations initiatives for national institution-building in the field of human rights.

It has been a source of major encouragement to us that the international community has supported the efforts of the Government of Sri Lanka in the pursuit of peace. While the eventual solution of our problems lies essentially in our own hands and through mechanisms of our own devising, we sincerely appreciate the interest and support of the international community. It is in this context that I have volunteered today to brief the Assembly on the situation in Sri Lanka.

The significance of this session of the United Nations General Assembly extends well beyond the fact that it commemorates 50 years in the life of the Organization. International life is in constant flux. No era is wholly static. Yet the last decade or so has seen radical changes affecting virtually every aspect of life on this planet. Not all of such changes have been welcome. Not all of the changes have reached their logical, or indeed illogical, conclusion.

The acclaimed transformation in South Africa has been a blessed exception. Institutionalized racism in its grosser forms has at last been vanquished. The South African experience has demonstrated the power of tolerance, understanding and inspired leadership to wear down the brutal, evil legacies of the past. It has also shown that there is a capacity for change in human attitudes once considered unthinkable. Racism, however, has continued in subtler forms elsewhere in the world. The international community must continue to be vigilant. That ugly phenomenon must never be tolerated, wherever it occurs and whatever its manifestations.

Sri Lanka feels deeply that the African continent needs the wholehearted and vigorous support of the international community to overcome the obstacles to development and growth in this vital region of the world. The strengthening and utilization of the capacities and resources of Africa, identified by the African countries themselves and the Economic Commission for Africa, and concerted action to implement the Programme of Action for the Least-Developed Countries are urgently called for.

The Middle East is the cradle of three of the world's great religions. Yet historical prejudices have weighed down the quest for peace. Resort to violence and terrorism, the expropriation of land and the development of illegal settlements have conspired to impede the momentum for peace. Sri Lanka supports the continuation of the peace process in the Middle East, the realization of the inalienable national rights of the Palestinian people

and the establishment of conditions of peace and stability for all States in the region which would enable them to develop within secure boundaries. Commitments made on interim agreements towards this objective, as Chairman Arafat of Palestine stated last Thursday, must be precise, honest and mutual.

In Bosnia, Sri Lanka welcomes the fact that the parties concerned have found it possible to commence peace negotiations although the guns have yet to be finally silenced. We feel deeply for, and share the sorrow of, those who mourn for lives lost, lives disrupted in the affected communities. We hope that a viable settlement acceptable to all will soon be concluded. I had occasion recently, speaking in the Parliament of Sri Lanka, to condemn unreservedly the inhumane and cruel treatment that has been inflicted upon the Muslims in Bosnia. These and other atrocities committed in Bosnia have been fully documented by the United Nations rapporteurs and humanitarian agencies and need to be condemned by the international community.

The role of the United Nations in that conflict has received special focus as the Organization, in this its fiftieth year, undergoes a period of introspection. The situation in Bosnia has been an unusually complex one in which the United Nations has had to deal with developments without precedent in the Organization's peace-keeping history. In terms of Article 17 of the United Nations Charter, peace-keeping is the collective financial responsibility of all States. A healthy, albeit controversial, debate has proceeded in the United Nations on peace-keeping and other related issues. The debate has made abundantly clear that United Nations intervention or involvement in any situation can expect to be successful only if certain basic considerations are heeded. First, any intervention must enjoy the general support and confidence of the international community and not be promoted merely to satisfy the political exigencies and partisan objectives of members of the Security Council or other powerful States. Secondly, in any intervention the consent of the countries in conflict must be clearly obtained. Finally, such politico-military operations must neither dominate United Nations activity nor be its principal financial liability. They must certainly not be carried out to the detriment of the pressing development priorities of the United Nations.

In "An Agenda for Peace" the Secretary-General has sought to evaluate manifold aspects of contemporary peace and security, not merely the question of peace-keeping operations. This evaluation has had a continuous focus in the General Assembly, in the Security Council, in other forums such as the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries as well as in national debate since the Secretary-General's initial report was presented in 1992. The cardinal aspect of "An Agenda for Peace" is the conviction that it is clearly better to prevent conflicts through heeding early warnings and encouraging quiet diplomacy rather than through launching major politico-military ventures to settle conflicts after they have erupted.

While economic factors have not always been the cause of conflict, we very much agree with the Secretary-General that the foundations for peace lie primarily in the realm of economic and social development.

The 1990s have often been described as a period of economic globalization, considering the increasing interdependence among States, greater international integration and flow of goods, services, capital and markets, as well as a more widespread and rapid dissemination of information and ideas through technological advancements in communications. Globalization is sometimes over- simplified as a phenomenon favourable to the emancipation of international economic activity. It is true that most economies which had been constricted or centrally controlled have now been liberalized and have, as it were, plugged in to the global economy. Yet, in the process, many developing countries have had to make painful structural adjustments in their economies at heavy cost to vulnerable sections of their populations. If there is greater overall international economic activity, it is also true that for many developing countries, despite their best efforts, the economic outlook has not been encouraging. The recent Conference of non-aligned countries held at Jakarta issued a renewed call for a new orientation between developed and developing countries whereby constructive dialogue and partnership were emphasized, based on a mutuality of interest and benefit, genuine interdependence and shared responsibility.

A major thrust of this approach has been to work out new practical aspects of international development cooperation which would embrace developed as well as developing countries, the more secure economies as well as those that are more vulnerable. The final communiqué issued earlier this year in Halifax, at the Summit of the seven major industrialized countries, proclaimed their willingness to cooperate with others to develop a new approach to international cooperation and to define the particular contribution expected of the United Nations system to develop such an approach. A vital aspect of this exercise should be the enhancement of cooperation

between the United Nations system and the Bretton Woods institutions.

Calls made earlier for a restructuring of international economic relations and a North-South dialogue have floundered in a sea of slogans. But we must realize that global interdependence has made international cooperation an imperative, not a slogan. The United Nations must assert its part in a more effective new multilateralism.

Almost two decades ago Sri Lanka adopted a liberal free-market economy in order to accelerate economic growth. My Government is taking steps to privatize State-controlled enterprises, in particular utilities and services provided by the Government, and to encourage foreign investment. We intend to benefit from the opportunities arising from the globalization of economic activity.

A number of world conferences have recently been held, covering a series of generic issues which have a direct bearing on the lives of people the world over. These have demonstrated both the promise and the paucity of international cooperation. Agenda 21, produced by the Rio Conference on Environment and Development, is yet to be fully operationalized due to the lack of necessary resources. Last year the International Conference on Population and Development affirmed the central role of the human being in all development and population activities. The World Summit for Social Development, held in March this year in Copenhagen, sought to promote concerted international action to deal with a crucial trio of contemporary concerns: poverty, unemployment and the disintegration of society. The World Conference on Women, in Beijing last month, dealt with a range of issues — political, social, religious and economic — affecting women and adopted a Platform for Action to empower women.

All these conferences have emphasized that responsibility for major global problems needs to be shared and that action to deal with them needs to be taken in concert. Regrettably, if expectations have been great, resources for their realization have been meagre. The political determination necessary to transform commitments into action still appears far less than adequate.

Despite the absence of optimal international cooperation in certain areas, some regional activities have made good progress. In our own region, the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) celebrates its tenth anniversary this year. The SAARC Preferential Trade Arrangement has made much headway and is expected to enter into force this year. We look to the future confident of consolidating our gains in a South Asian free-trade arrangement. Sri Lanka, together with our South Asian partners, will explore all avenues to seek and build on common ground and optimize regional cooperation in areas of mutual interest. Indeed, cooperation within, as well as between, regions offers much scope for economic progress and equitable sharing of global wealth. We look forward to greater interregional cooperation to advance this process.

Sri Lanka was privileged to have served the Review and Extension Conference on the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) and to facilitate the adoption of a package of decisions without resort to a vote. While the outcome of the Conference has been widely hailed, it is vital also to emphasize the need for the establishment of a comprehensive disarmament regime to meet the security concerns of all countries, including the non-nuclear-weapon States, through the realization of commitments undertaken under the Treaty and the decisions taken at the 1995 Conference by the nuclear-weapon States. These commitments include the conclusion of a comprehensive test-ban Treaty, legally binding assurances to non-nuclear-weapon States against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons, the unimpeded, non-discriminatory transfer of nuclear technology for peaceful purposes and the eventual elimination of all nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction throughout the world.

We have expressed our deep disappointment and concern over the resumption of nuclear testing by some nuclear Powers, which is contrary to the undertakings of utmost restraint entered into at the NPT Conference. We therefore urge that expeditious negotiations be conducted on a comprehensive test-ban treaty, with a view to concluding it in 1996. In this regard, we are happy to support President Clinton's initiative to place the Geneva negotiations on a comprehensive test-ban treaty on a faster track in order to achieve a zero-yield test-ban treaty by 1996. We also note the recent assurance in this respect given by President Chirac of France.

The establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones and zones of peace is an essential part of regional security. The non-aligned countries, including Sri Lanka, have sought to establish conditions of peace, security and stability in the Indian Ocean region. The United Nations Ad Hoc Committee on the Indian Ocean, taking into account current realities, has been considering new, alternative approaches to ensuring peace and security in this vital but volatile region of the world. Sri Lanka, as

Chairman of the Ad Hoc Committee, has been in consultation with those permanent members of the Security Council that have not been participating in the Committee's work in order to re-enlist their active participation and give fresh impetus to the process of strengthening cooperation in the Indian Ocean region, including in respect of non-military aspects of security.

Sri Lanka's initiative for Indian Ocean Marine Affairs Cooperation (IOMAC) has focused on the development of international cooperation in marine affairs in the economic, scientific and technical fields. The recent Mauritius and Perth initiatives on the Indian Ocean have recognized IOMAC's pioneering effort in helping to widen cooperation in the marine sector. The process for the formalization of IOMAC through the ratification of the 1990 Arusha Agreement on the Organization for Indian Ocean Marine Affairs Cooperation is being further accelerated in order to provide an effective mechanism for intensifying cooperation, in keeping with the growing aspirations of the countries of the region.

The fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations has spawned a variety of studies on the future of the Organization, initiated within as well as outside the United Nations. Working groups of the General Assembly have been busy during recent sessions, studying the financial situation of the Organization, development issues, the Security Council, the Agenda for Peace and other aspects of the United Nations.

The issues are complex. Progress is slow. Decisions are few. A resolution on the strengthening of the United Nations system, patiently negotiated on the initiative of the President of the forty-ninth session of the General Assembly, was adopted by consensus. There is much to support a coordinated, rational and informed examination of recommendations which seek to strengthen the United Nations and render it a more effective and efficient Organization. A piecemeal approach may not be an effective one, given the complexity of the individual issues involved as well as their interrelationship. We look forward to further work on this initiative next year.

The Security Council has perhaps been the single most contentious United Nations organ under scrutiny. Sri Lanka's own position is that in many respects the Council still reflects power realities that prevailed 50 years ago. There can be no warrant for the perpetuation of exclusive rights without accommodation of other relevant considerations. A substantial increase in the membership of the United Nations, particularly from among developing countries, needs to be more equitably reflected in the composition of the Council as well. Furthermore, there are reasons, at least as compelling as those proclaimed 50 years ago to justify the status conferred at that time on the Council's five permanent members, to now advance the claims of other States that aspire to join the five. These new aspirants to permanent-member status include, reasonably and justifiably in our view, non-aligned countries as well. Regrettably, eligibility claims for membership in the Council continue to be made on assumptions of power, military or economic, and its global or regional projection. But this vitiates basic principles underlying democratic representation and considerations of justice and equity. If regional criteria are considered, then, Asia, Africa and Latin America are either unrepresented or severely under-represented in the present Council. Finally, the veto power, given its untrammelled character and its association with the possession of nuclear weapons, needs, in our opinion, careful, sober review.

The Security Council's methods of work have in the recent past been subject to welcome improvement, particularly in permitting a better exchange of views between Council members and others. There is, however, much more that needs to be done to make the Security Council truly accessible, democratic and responsive to Member States of the United Nations, on whose behalf the Council is meant to act in accordance with Charter principles. A single example relating to the imposition and implementation of sanctions would suffice to indicate the gap between principle and practice. Situations in which sanctions are imposed vary greatly and no uniform rules are applicable. Sanctions cannot be applied with surgical precision to impact exclusively on those at whom they are aimed. Sanctions can thus hurt innocent civilians, affect entire economies and, as the Council itself acknowledges, impact adversely on third countries that are in no way involved in the transgressions of the regime against which sanctions are imposed. Yet decisions by the Council on the imposition of sanctions are not based on prior consultations with the countries concerned, to assess carefully the true impact, extent and reach of such extreme measures. As sanctions are mandatory, all countries are bound to implement them even when they have had no part in the decisions leading to them. In his "Supplement to 'An Agenda for Peace'", the Secretary-General has made a number of useful recommendations relating to the serious problems encountered in the implementation of sanctions. The non-aligned countries have studied these proposals and we await further developments.

Later this month, the United Nations will mark its fiftieth anniversary with a special commemorative meeting. Although the occasion will, by its very nature, embody the highest possible political commitment made by the international community to the United Nations, it must not be seen purely as an opportunity for the Organization to garner a harvest of tributes. Much ails the Organization. Nevertheless, it is Sri Lanka's firm conviction that the membership of the United Nations has within it the means to reinvest in the Organization all it requires to fulfil the principles of the Charter. This would require much more than a symbolic declaration of commitment by each Member State. We owe it to the people we represent to strive diligently in the years to come to make this Organization truly a place where the highest aspirations of humanity can be fulfilled.

Tentative programme of work

Mr. Reyn (Belgium), Vice-President, took the Chair.

The Acting President (*interpretation from French*): I should like to draw the attention of the General Assembly to document A/INF/50/5, which contains a tentative programme of work and schedule of plenary meetings of the Assembly for the month of October. I wish to point out that this schedule was prepared to facilitate the organization of the work of delegations and to help ensure that the relevant documentation is ready for the discussion of the items in question.

The lists of speakers for all the items listed in document A/INF/50/5 are now open.

The President of the Assembly will in due course announce the dates of the consideration of other agenda items and will keep the Assembly informed of any additions or changes.

The meeting rose at 1.20 p.m.